YOUTH NEWSLETTER

LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION/YOUTH DESK No. 17 December 1985

FROM THE CONTENT OF THIS ISSUE:

Youth and Mission - 4 contributions
Letter of evaluation of PAYG from FRG delegates
Reports on different youth events
USSR visitation
3 reflections on the Moscow Youth Festival
News in Brief

EDITORIAL:

POWER IN LOVE

You have heard that it was said "You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy. But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust". (Mt. 5, 43-45)

Once I was reflecting on this idea in the church were many people were gathered. I came to the conclusion: if I leave the peaceful methods and turn to the violent ones, I have shown my weakness. It was like that in my personal life too. When I lost my patience as my small son didn't want to obey and turned to a violent method, I regretted it and I have seen - now you are the weak father, you wanted to show how strong you are and what do you see? No, if you would have been strong enough you would have found the way to show your love in a clear way and the success would have been secured.

It was like this also in my life as a pastor. If I had confronted with my anger the members of the congregation, who had several times accepted our invitation to participate in the Christian community, but who never joined us, I would have proven that I am not the servant of the living God "who makes" still "his sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust". Yes, there is no other way but to pray for love and meet everybody in love, a love that was given to us in order to show everybody that we believe God loves them too.

After this sermon in the church, I received a long letter from one person who was listening to me at that time, saying that I was wrong in making that conclusion: to use violence means to show how poor and weak you are and to be peaceful and loving shows the real power. He was a retired pastor of my church who was actively supporting the fight against Fascism during World War II. At that time it was necessary to use all possible means in order to stop the crazy violation of all human rights, he said in his letter. Now I was confused. Does this convincing idea that I found in the living world of God suit all situations? I remembered how much human sacrifice there was also in the history of my nation because of the lack of freedom and justice and in the attempt to improve the situation. Didn't I offend all those people who were dying in the hope that positive change is coming? How sorry I was about all this. And I was not able to give an answer immediately.

YOUTH NEWSLETTER: Published by the Youth, Desk, Department of Church Cooperation, LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION, P.O. Box No 66, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland. Tel. (022) 91 61 11.

Editors: Julius Filo, Youth Coordinator
Birgitta Voltenauer, Secretary

But afterwards I was following this circle of ideas as I had the opportunity to meet with young Christians at the Pre-Assembly Youth Gathering in Budapest. They were not satisfied with the justice in the world, with the terrible arms race, with unemployment in many countries in the world, with social care for children, with the lack of possibilities of developing one's gifts in an adequate education. We were unhappy because of the oppressive regimes where they don't stop even if the life of human beings is in danger.

Many of those whom I met were saying the same thing: let God give us strenght to find peaceful solutions! Give us patience to approach in love those who according to their work and thoughts are our enemies! Please don't let us accept their rule of dangerous play with peace! Let us see them as Your children who have received many gifts from Your hand, oh God!

I have met so many people who say that there has already been enough unvoluntary human sacrifices, their value does not equal the progress the sacrifice brought. Let us be strong and look for the loving methods to overcome the evil.

It seems to make sense in the daily life of everyone. And if it works in a so called private sphere, it must influence the solution of the common issues. Of course, there is much hope in this attitude, but isn't hope the one value we need today? And it is probably much easier to stick to this hope, that was given to us from our Lord, in Europe than in South Africa or elsewhere in the world where there is no permanent peace.

But I still do believe that this is the powerful method that Jesus took on himself and which was so fruitful for many people. Therefore it is a way also for you and me.

A NOTE

You are again opening an issue of our Youth Newsletter. It is the only one in this year, a year that is so important for young people in the world. Maybe many of you thought that the mail didn't function correctly or that the mailing list was reduced and you are not on it anymore. But it is not like that.

This issue proves that this year was not a poor one for the LWF youth work. Of course, the previous one, 1984, was the most important one in the history of the LWF youth work because of the Pre-Assembly Youth Gathering in Budapest. Coming back to this event, we are trying to learn for our work and life. The results of our gathering are giving us not only important guidelines for the future but also a strong and everlasting experience of the Christian community that the Holy Spirit has created.

In this report you will find several reports from youth events where LWF was in some way involved.

The Youth Newsletter has been an important means of information in our LWF youth work. In order to deepen the purpose of the newsletter we would like

---

Photo on front page shows Ten Sing Group from Norway

to invite you to send us your contributions reflecting on your Christian existence in your particular context. We feel that we want to share not only an insight into the international youth work where LWF youth is participating, but also complete the picture we create by informing on the international level with your personal life/faith reflections. We hope that we will be able to present with a regional balance your reflections on your everday life which we want to better understand, and share in a common responsiblity your witness about the advantages and joys that faith brings to you as well as temptations and struggles you have to face because of your faith. We are looking forward to your contributions and thank you in advance.

****

A PERSONAL LETTER FROM THE EDITOR:
==========

Dear Brothers and Sister,

I would like to introduce myself to all of you, who are receiving our "Youth Newsletter" and are interested in the LWF youth work. My name is Julius Filo and I was born on December 17, 1950. I come from the Slovak Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Czechoslovakia and this summer I was appointed Youth Coordinator of the LWF Youth Desk and started my work here on September 25. Now I am here in Geneva with my wife Anna and three small children, Julius 1977, Danica 1979 and Peter 1984.

In order to come here I had to leave my congregation in Jur pri Bratislava with its 250 members consisting of a small group of young people, children, adults, grandmothers and grandfathers, some of whom were waiting for a regular help from their congregation and pastor. I also left my first task - the role of lecturer in practical theology at the Slovak Evangelical Theological Faculty in Bratislava with its over 50 students and 10 colleagues. Before that, I studied theology in Bratislava and Leipzig (GDR). One year I was assisting pastor, then for five years spiritual supervisor of the student house of our faculty and at the same time lecturer at the same faculty. Since about ten years I have been regularly involved in the work of the Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe, where I was for three years a member of the executive committee and for two years the vice- chairperson. I got acquainted with the peace movement in the Christian Peace Conference where I was a member of the youth commission for several years.

ANOTHER NOTE

As you can see, the LWF youth desk has prepared a special publication for the International Youth Year. The publication contains the most important thematical contributions to the PAYG in Budapest (Allan Boesak's Bible Studies, 2 presentations on "Peace and Justice" and recommendations from the PAYG) and a lot of beautiful pictures. We hope, after reading it and finding it as interesting and useful as we do, you will not forget your interested friends and order as many copies as you like. We will be happy to send them to you free of charge!

You would probably be interested to know what i would like to achieve in my work at the LWF youth desk. Well, you will note some of my interests, I hope, from my direct contribution in the meetings and service and in the articles of the "Youth Newsletter". But in general I would like to be a God's means to help youth of our Lutheran churches to become full partners in the congregations, on the church level and in the international work of the LWF. I would be happy if our common witness in words and deeds will clearly express our interest for the solution of the problems of the present and future of the churches, mankind and the world. I would be happy together with all of you, if our Lord Jesus Christ one day will stand to His words concerning children, also in the case of our young generation: "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the Kingdom of God. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it".

I am looking foward to working together with you as children of the living God searching for justice and peace in the love that Jesus showed to us.

What is the program of the youth desk going to look like? We will continue in the good tradition that Alf Idland, with all of you who supported his work actively, started: regional and subregional youth and youth leaders meetings, first of all in those regions where our assistance is necessary, visitations with youth group to different regions, publication of the newsletter, all the required assistance to the member churches, youth internship program, etc. All of this I hope to do on the basis of your initiative and with the support of you and your churches.

Several new tasks were given to the youth desk by the Pre-Assembly Youth Gathering in Budapest. Some of the activities are already in preparation, e.g. visitation program to Asia and Consultation on "Root causes of social injustice". We would also like to organize a youth meeting in Caracas, in the Latin American region, prior to the Congress of Latin American Lutheran Churches.

These are several words of introduction for all of you whom I didn't have the opportunity to meet at the Pre-Assembly Youth Gathering in Budapest and to all of you with whom we would like to share the Christian fellowship.

Wishing you Gods blessing for your work and life,

Julius Filo

****

YOUTH AND MISSION

We are offering to you four personal reflections on this very important theme that was a study theme of the meeting of the Commission on Church Cooperation in April 1985 in Lausanne. The four reflections were prepared for and used at the Commission meeting. These contributions may also be of interest to you.

Youth and Mission - by the Rev. Julius Paul from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia and Singapore

Introduction

Youth as defined by the United Nations are people between 15 and 24 years of age. However, young people are not a homogeneous group. They can be distinguished in terms of their age and what they do with their time. For example, some youth are students, some are working, some are married with parental responsibilities, there are others who have dropped out of school and are drug addicts or unemployed. Also youth are in a distinct and significant period of transition. It is a social transition; the period that leads to acceptance as an adult. It is also a biological transition; the period that begins with puberty and ends when physical development is complete. Also it must be recognized that some groups of young people are quite different from others in the same age group because of circumstances and opportunities. For example, there are differences between white Australian youth and those of aboriginal descent.

Although youth may be understood as persons who need to grow and mature, they are sometimes treated as adults and sometimes as persons who need guidance. For example, if you are 12 years and above you pay full price for the theatre and travel, at 18 years of age you are eligible to vote in some countries, and you are able to marry without parental consent and even buy alcohol. Also there are working people who hold executive positions in many establishments. As such, young people can experience confusion as to their identity. Legally they are treated as adults and are allowed to make some decisions, but in their relationship with adults they may not experience acceptance as equals.

Youth Potential and Limitation

It is often said that young people are idealistic. They are sensitive to what is happening around them. They bring to the world a fresh approach, vigour, courage of conviction, and the power to change, because they do not have vested interests in the existing order. Youth are able to challenge the older people and tell them where they have failed. Youth have the pioneering spirit and by their very nature are open to all issues of the world. They do not accept structures of the past as eternal and look forward to a better world. These energetic young people refuse to be compromised with the glaring injustices and absurdities of this world, like the war armaments.

Other examples of youth involvement in issues include the contribution of youth to the ecumenical movement in its formative stages, their involvement in urban industrial mission which deals mainly with issues of justice. Therefore, youth can be seen as a sign of hope.

However, the questions have been raised, "Are we not being too optimistic in placing so much hope in today's youth? Are they different from other people just because they are young? Do all youth have the same refreshing critical attitude towards the establishment?" As we reflect on these questions, we are called to examine some directions most youth take. The general option of the average youth is to remain comfortable within the immediate environment. Students opt to do well in their examinations so that they can go to university and get a prestigious job, while the concern of

working youth is to strive to advance his career so that he will be able to reap financial benefits and accumulate wealth. Most seem unconcerned about other areas of life. As a result, they have a narrow and a restricted view of life. Although it is true that youth are capable of thinking critically, some youth do not respond to situations in that way because of the political, educational, cultural, social and economic system that they are part of. Youth have been taught to think only within the framework of these systems, which hold material rewards as the hallmark of success in life.

Youth and Church

Within the context of the church, youth are more often talked about as problems rather than as potential. Young people come to church with their problems, like unemployment, pressure to do well at school, and a feeling of uncertainty about the future. They are also affected by the drug culture. In spite of the problems they face, members of the congregation find it difficult to accept and work with young people. What the congregation most often offers is a youth room, table tennis tables and hi-fi equipment. In response the congregation expects of youth to dress properly, do well at school, keep out of trouble and attend church every Sunday. The church offers them nothing more. Young people are looking for a certainty which lies far deeper than games and sport. They seek goals and directions that are more important than good examination results. They are looking for reliable standards by which they can shape their future.

Youth has always thought of the church as an event, God's event in the world, God's presence in the world. However, in their experience they see the church essentially as a moral institution with a legal structure where the payment of church dues often seems more important than the concerns for the human being. Some questions youth asks of the church are:

- Where in the church do we find people who are really prepared to act out their Christian faith?

- Where in the church are people to be found who are really prepared to seek out the young people where they live and be of help to them?

- Where in the church can those who discover faith really live this faith with others?

In the experience of youth, whenever they propose anything in the presence of church leaders, they feel that they are not accepted, they feel unsure of themselves. This feeling of uncertainty is derived partly from the defensive smile on the faces of the adults, and the message is clear, "Yes, what you say is all very well, but it's not how things work." They are made to feel like an idealist who wants to change the world overnight. Youth feel that their role in meetings with older people is token or cosmetic, and to be pointed out proudly as evidence that young people are involved in the decision-making process. This confirms the feeling that the church cannot listen, that it only wants to teach and is unable to learn.

Youth and Mission

Young people need to be helped to find themselves. Their faith needs to be rekindled and confirmed. Young people need to be encouraged to dream dreams and see visions. This is essential to enable them to move beyond their present situations. A sense of idealism needs to be fostered. A

church without vision, without hope has a limited present and no future. Vision is the basis of our social goals. Without it, there is no direction.

The task of the church is to encourage this development of vision in young people. This includes working with them to establish the conditions in which vision and hope are possible. This is important for all of society. Young people are often the ones who look at society with idealism and thus point the way to a fairer and more just future. How do we do this?

Philippians 4:13 says, "I can do all things in him, who strengthens him." Christ's presence is empowering. It is the process of growing in power. That is to be truly human. In this process people realize their potential as images of God, collaborators in the task of building a just society and creating a future. Church leaders should be empowered to respect the dignity of young people and their growth in independence be supported, also to consult them in all matters that affect them. The church has a vision that is life-giving. To be effective with young people it must speak this message in their language and within their culture. Some other suggestions that could be considered include:

a) Some countries have compulsory national service programs for their young people. Their doctrines or ideology are shared with these young people. In the same way, the church could also have such programs where young people are challenged to give three months of their time, when they could participate in an action-reflection program, a program that will enable them to discover a new depth and meaning in life.

b) Programs for young people organized by churches should not only center around moral issues of a personal nature, but on the morality of issues which affect the whole community, be it a political, social or an economic issue.

c) Youth are seeking for authenticity in the faith. What is preached from the pulpit, they want to know how to put the word into deeds. Avenues must be created for young people to act out their faith. It could be writing of letters to families of prisoners or it could be offering the hand of fellowship to an old folks' home or drug center. Young people want to do something. These actions will bring them close to the issues of life.

There are many other things that could be done to engage youth in mission. It is our responsibility to create the future now. The future is now.

Julius Paul (Pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia and Singapore, Resource Person at the Pre-Assembly Youth Gathering in Budapest)

Youth in Mission by Joan Löfgren, USA

"This worship service sure is complicated," I thought to myself during my first visit to a Lutheran church. I was 15, had been a nominal member of another church, and was invited by a friend to worship with her. In spite of the unfamiliarity of that first worship experience, something happened that Sunday and subsequent Sundays thereafter -- as a young person, I began to feel at home in a Christian community. How do young people in the

USA experience the church today? How can we reach out to youth estranged from church life? What special challenges do young Christians in the US experience in witnessing to their faith, in their discipleship? Three themes which come to mind when reflecting on such questions: Faith has a message of freedom; the church as a welcoming community; and modern challenges to discipleship.

Faith Has a Message of Freedom

For many young people, the church stands as a representative of conservative, so-called Victorian morality, where do's and don't's are preached. Talking recently with other students about their attitudes toward the church, it became clear that the church, as they see it, has nothing to offer them. Perhaps they consider themselves Christians, or would not openly fight against Christianity, but the church as an institution is not a place where they want to be.

That first Sunday in a Lutheran church, the pastor preached about grace, about the freeing power of God's love. We are freed from the bondages of sin and despair, from our inevitable judgment as imperfect humans when we fail to fulfill God's law, God's intentions for us. As a teenager surrounded by more than enough laws for living, I found this message exhilarating. Of course, I was and still am challenged to follow God's law, but the message that day of a God that not only judges, but frees, was an important one.

Although the messages of Law and Gospel belong together, young people in the US today need to hear about the power of God's love to free us from loneliness and despair, a power higher and deeper than the morality of any particular era.

The Church as a Welcoming Community

My first Sunday in my congregation in New York City was a pleasant surprise. The congregation seemed to be a mixture of young people in their 20's and 30's, Asians, and other people. Later I discovered that many of them, like me, were living far away from home and family, and came together in the congregation searching for a sense of a spiritual family, a community. The young adults were mostly students and professionals, living on their own in a city of millions. The Asians were mostly Batak Indonesians, who had moved to New York, bringing along their Lutheran tradition. A special young adult ministry was developed, and proved especially effective among younger single people. Our attempts to build a community were hindered by various difficulties, but the aim of reaching out to young adults through this ministry was clear. For many of us involved in the work, our commitment to nurturing a community was a healthy contradiction to the world of fastpaced mobility and loneliness around us.

In many larger congregations in the US today, members are forming small "koinonia" or cell groups to help develop a better sense of community. This is being done by members of all ages, but youth groups have functioned along similar lines for decades. But there is a danger -- the community among young people may be so inviting and warm, in contrast to more formal relationships within the congregation, that young people participate only in their own activities, becoming a small congregation within a congregation.

Worship is important in unifying all parts of the congregation. Unfortu-

nately, many young people in the US want to "sing the Lord's song" but find that the "foreign land" is within the church itself! The language and music used in worship may not encourage a feeling of belonging or invite participation. This can be difficult for the youth who has grown up in the church, or for someone new to the Lutheran tradition in worship. Do we demonstrate to young people through worship or other means, that the church is a community which welcomes their presence and participation?

Modern Challenges to Discipleship

Young Christians in the US do not live in a vacuum, but in a complex country with hundreds of variations in culture, economy, education, etc. As a young person trying to witness to my faith in such a context, I see five major challenges:

1. **Fear:** Many young people (some with good reason) fear for their economic future. The fear that one may not get a job after finishing school or may never own a house may be genuine and well-founded. But as a Christian I am challenged to avoid despair over such economic forecasts and to avoid idolatry of material wealth.

2. **Apathy:** What does it matter? We talk of peace in the church, but the arms race goes on. We talk of justice and human rights for God's children, but the famines and imprisonments continue, in spite of my contribution, my letter of protest. We need a lot of courage to stand up to the temptation of apathy, to witness to the Kingdom.

3. **Privatism/Individualism:** My generation has inherited a taunting nickname: the ME generation. It is becoming more and more accepted to be first and foremost concerned about ME, MY career, MY salary, MY status. It is easy to forget about Jesus, the "man for others." A danger exists that the Gospel becomes distorted to fit our self-centeredness: alongside my other concerns, is my concern for MY salvation. The example of a self-giving Christ stands as a sharp reminder of our call to be Christ for others, to give ourselves for others.

4. **Secularization:** In a world where human knowledge is reaching into the structure of the atom and the order of the universe, a sense of mystery is sometimes hard to find. In society, the areas once controlled more by the church are now controlled by other institutions, by and large - for example, education and health care, diminishing the authority of the church in certain parts of life (and rightly so). Young Christians who have grown up in this context are challenged to discover the mystery of hope in the midst or rationalism, and to witness to the importance of the church in a world controlled by other institutions.

5. **Fundamentalism:** In a complex world where right and wrong are not always, and perhaps not even often clear, a message of "good" and "evil" is attractive. Although mainline churches preach as well about good and evil, perhaps the fundamentalist movement in the US puts Christian life in a neater package. But as young people sometimes attracted by such neat packages, we must ask ourselves if life as a Christian can be packaged so neatly, so simply. Perhaps some of us want to flee from the modern world's complexities to follow some prescriptions for living. It is difficult to measure the strength of the fundamentalist movement in the US, but disillusionment with mainline churches has encouraged many young people to consider such an alternative. We in the main-line

churches need to ask ourselves what our churches did not offer these young people.

Although I have no easy answers to these challenges, and struggle with them myself, my hope is continually strengthened by signs in the church that young people are open to hearing the Gospel and are witnessing to their faith in many different ways.

Practical Suggestions: The following are ideas which may help in expressing the Gospel in the American context:

1. My life is my witness. In my church an evangelism training program has been under way for several years, which helps people to tell their "faith stories", what their faith has meant in their own lives. This could be very helpful for young people as well, and some have already participated.

2. Communication. We need better methods of communication, to reach those who never come to church. Radio and television reach primarily older people.

3. Witness in word and deed. The understanding of mission as having one goal -- conversion -- limits our potential for witnessing in the world. Church-sponsored programs in the US or abroad to help the poor, bring justice to the oppressed, are important forms of witness, although they may not produce easily identifiable conversions. For some young people, the Gospel may take on new meaning through such witness.

Joan Löfgren (Member of Lutheran Church in America, LWF Youth intern 1982-83, Coordination for LWF Pre-Assembly Youth Gathering 1983-84)

Youth and Mission - A sketch from Hungary by Tamas Fabiny

It is difficult to judge to what measure the following thoughts and observations are valid throughout Eastern Europe. The following description of the situation very likely reflects in one way or another only the special Hungarian conditions. The two main sections with very similar titles do not represent a sort of grammatical game, but an attempt to approach the same theme from two different starting points.

1. The Mission of Youth (Genitivus Ojbectivus)

The Background:

Earlier there was a time when huge evangelistic campaigns could be held and many young people participated in them. Quite a number of these young people came from backgrounds which were quite different from that of the church, others from families with a traditional, but very stiff religiosity. This happened soon after the end of World War II. This time of the revival movement was suddenly replaced by the "period of great silence," when it was not recommended for the pastors to be engaged in youth work, because the school and the pioneer movement claimed to work among young people. During this period both the mission activities among young people outside the church and in the congregations were stopped. This was the time when the large Christian organizations (YMCA, other different Christian associations which gathered young persons) were dissolved through ad-

ministrative measures, and this meant that only the local congregations could have had a possibility to continue with some kind of youth programs. Fear or weak faith, lack of time or indifference contributed to the fact that in many places even this possibility was neglected.

The Possibilities:

This period is already behind us, but its consequences can be clearly seen as we observe that members of this generation - those who are now around 40 years old - are not much represented in church activities, either on a ministerial level or at the lay level. This, of course, makes it difficult to reach out to their children. Here we could experience what it means: "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge" (Jer. 31:29). The fact is that the period of "long silence" came to an end and the mission among youth is alivened again. This can be observed at many levels.

The local congregation is the most obvious area of this activity. We cannot take it for granted that someone will come to the Bible circle for children (Sunday School), preparatory courses for confirmation, Bible classes for juniors or seniors, meeting of young couples. One has to invite them to such gatherings with untiring zeal. For some years there has been a possibility to conduct youth work at the national level, i.e. annual camps organized for different age groups, etc.

We should also remember the international contacts. Through our delegates we can be more and more involved in the life and work of the youth of the whole world. The LWF has played a very important role in this field. The Pre-Assembly Youth Gathering which was held in Budapest, moved many young people in the host church, and its influence can be well observed in the congregations.

Difficulties:

In our days the whole society can speak with some justification about the "problem with youth." The revolutionary spirit of the sixties which wanted to build a completely new world has become a sort of fog. We see many "empty", burned out young people who think that what they miss in their lives can be replaced by things like alcohol, drugs, nihilism, aggression, etc. I think that the church should be better equipped to get acquainted with the subculture of the youth. If it does not make efforts in this direction, it will reach only a few well-behaved young persons. (At this point I would like to mention some programs which were recently initiated by the Protestant Churches in Hungary, like the project to reach out for drifting young people, programs to save drug addicts, alcoholics and prostitutes.)

We have to accept the reality that education in the schools (although theoretically the possibility exists to receive religious instruction upon request) is basically atheistic. The Pioneer Movement and the Federation of Communist Youth are carrying out a conscious and planned propaganda campaign among our youth. If the church does not find the youngsters with what mission can offer them, they will not even have the chance to be confronted with a choice. However, many parents want to protect their children from the imagined difficulties of such an alternative. They are afraid that the so-called "double track" education might have negative consequences for them. This means that they would like to avoid that their children should be confronted with two different ideologies: one in the

school and one in the church. (However, in many cases the consequence of this fear from negative results of polarized education is the following: insufficient education, spiritual poverty, lack of a value system. Some decades ago, the religious classes offered in the public and private schools were called: "Studies of faith and morals." When the religious classes were eliminated from the obligatory curriculum of the schools, teaching of moral values also disappeared.)

Now we have arrived at the responsibility of the parents. There is a difference when a father and mother send their children to church - perhaps with the idea that during the time spent there they are not loafing around - and when the parents take them to the church. The encouragement of the parents expressed to their children from the time they are very small to go to the church is hardly convincing. (Unfortunately, today we even have to accept such a reasoning as progress, when parents give their consent to the child's intention to go to church, saying that the child is at least not hearing anything bad in church. It would be better if we could bring parents to say that the child is hearing something good in church.)

Method and Content

The new methods are generally attractive. This is valid especially for the youthful, sometimes untraditional way of conducting a church service. This might include modern music, even dance, integration of a pantomime. However, we have to watch carefully that the content should not be undermined by all these features. We should take note of the tendency that what is really very old can be considered also as very modern. Young people generally have a sort of interest in mysticism. It is important that young people should get a role, a possibility for actively cooperating in everything the church does. They should not only remain "consumers". Mission among young people should always aim at giving them a task, i.e., to read a text at the service, sing, participate in church visits, etc. Finally, our church life should not be like a one-way street where the pastor is "presenting revelations", but like a two-way street where there is a possibility to ask questions, to discuss issues and initiate something from below.

2. The Mission of Youth

From the previously presented situation, there is a way which leads consequently to another aspect of our theme. If young people feel that the church needs them, they are ready to assume responsibilities also in the field of mission. And the mission among ones' peers is one of the most authentic outreach activities! As a member of youth groups I experienced many times, that the life of such a fellowship became really alive when not only the pastor sought out each young person in the congregation, but if the young people themselves were involved in this work. One brought the other to the meetings. If this work is done by the pastor, one can say that he/she has an obligation to carry it out. But if a young person does that missionary work, it can come only from a personal conviction.

In today's Hungary, we are not anymore in a period when someone has to be ashamed because of his or her religiosity. It is very unlikely that someone is ridiculed, because he or she attends a church service. The Bible is a very desirable book, especially among young people. Because the State-run book shops do not sell Bibles, the young persons search for shops which carry Bibles. This gives the churches a good opportunity to make contact with these persons. It can be reported as a recent development

that giving a sketchy knowledge of the content of the Bible is again part of the classes on literature in public schools. Many theatrical pieces and books are somehow related to biblical themes. This indicates that there is an increased interest in the Bible.

We should here mention a direction of the mission outreach activities of young people which might be considered as unusual, but nevertheless important. That is the outreach of young people toward their parents! We have more and more examples of teenagers - sometimes in spite of the apathy and prohibition of their parents - who come to a living faith, attend church and participate in youth activities, discovering with sadness the closed attitude of their parents toward spiritual matters. The faith of young people deeply includes the desire to bring those who are close to them to the sphere of the Gospel.

In summary we can state that youth are at the same time the object and subject of mission - both a recipient and an agent. The generation which grew up after World War II was considerably alienated from the church. With intensive mission work, new methods and much fantasy, we should try our best so that the second generation should get closer to it. (Naturally, we know that the final goal of missionary work is not to bring people into the church, but to Jesus Christ!)

It is a strong hope that in this activity of our churches, the LWF can also render us a service. One concrete form of this assistance could be the distribution of written material prepared for young people in a much larger circle, the organization of leadership training camps and gatherings with a festival like character at which the goal will not be to solve the great problems of humankind, but to strengthen the faith of young women and men who participate in them. It would be important that as the DCC Youth Desk is strengthened, these concerns will be remembered.

With the above related descriptions and suggestions I have tried to show that minority churches in an Eastern European country can share some of their important experiences with others, but I must also admit that there are many things that they still have to learn. In this undertaking the LWF might serve as a "clearing house".

I appreciate that you gave me a chance to make a contribution to this theme.

Tamas Fabiny (Pastor of the Lutheran Church in Hungary, member of preparatory committee for the Pre-Assembly Youth Gathering in Budapest)

Youth and Mission - Appraisals of youth work in the Federal Republic of Germany, particularly in Bavaria - Description of the situation and perspectives (by Udo Hahn)

1. Preliminary Remarks

If you believe today that people are no longer religious because of enlightenment, you are mistaken as regards the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). People are actually deeply religious, just not church-affiliated. This is also true of the youth, who are caught up in a search for religiosity but strive to realize their faith outside the existing church. We can even speak of an estrangement between youth and the church. The re-

sults from a statistical poll from 1981 which questioned youth between 16 and 19 years of age may clarify this.

Catholics:

Church attendance	1952/53	1967	1980
regularly	50%	40%	16%
irregularly	23%	28%	24%
seldom	19%	22%	37%
never	8%	10%	23%

Protestants:

Church attendance	1952/53	1967	1980
regularly	9%	6%	2%
irregularly	26%	25%	15%
seldom	45%	48%	48%
never	20%	21%	35%

If you ask youth what role the Bible plays in their lives, the answer is even more disappointing. Only 1% of the youth read their Bible regularly.

For the church and its youth work this is a great challenge which is in urgent need of an answer.

2. Theological Reflections

"You will be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8). This is the last reference we have in Acts to Jesus speaking to his disciples before he ascended to his father. Two days after this festival day this sentence can also speak directly to us. We are invited to be our Lord's witnesses. As varied as our professions may be, our routine, the area of life from which we come, this sentence unites us, bidding us to be his witnesses. In other words, we should speak of him, point to him, share his Word and his works. And witnesses are needed above all when truth is involved, the full truth of God and the full truth of our lives. Jesus needs such witnesses today and beyond us. God has entrusted his fully valid truth to human witnesses. Our inadequacy and limitations do not stop him from deciding this way. We might ask why, shake our heads, but it is so. The spreading of faith has received this headstart from God and he accompanies us in the total freedom of his power. And we can experience and observe that God through today throughout the world has effected faith and trust in others through human witnesses. Faith lives.

Witnessing with the Word is at the top of the list in Christianity. The fullness of the biblical statements is concentrated on Christ and how he is taught, witnessed, confessed, preached and praised. But it also includes a behaviour which is outwardly noticeable and which evokes questions. There is a behaviour which is in and of itself a witness (1 Peter 2:12, Philippians 4:5). "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have" (1 Peter 3:15). Here once again we can read Jesus' call to be his witnesses. And the clear goal is to win disciples, to awaken faith in Christ.

Prof. Dr. Manfred Seitz of Erlangen has introduced an important differentiation here when he says that it is not enough to win sympathizers, we

need to win disciples. Not only sympathizers, not coalitions, but rather discipleship, that is to say trust in the resurrected one is the goal.

This includes at the same time a call to mission, which is a vital element of the Christian congregation. For our youth work in the FRG and especially in Bavaria the following questions result as touchstones:

What serves to build up the congregation? What helps the fellowship in worship services? What leads to Eucharist? What supports prayer? What strengthens the consciousness of faith, the knowledge of Christian teachings, knowledge of the Bible, knowledge of the catechism? What strengthens the holding together of generations?

3. The Issue of Conceptions

The Landesjugendkammer (regional youth chamber) of the Evangelical Youth in Bavaria (EJB), the highest body which represents the interests of Protestant youth (in Bavaria there are ca. 110,000), has chosen as its theme for the year 1985/86: "To live, argue and act with the Bible."

It decided on the following goals in relation to this theme:

a) Experience the Bible as both a book relevant to society as well as personally molding. Interest youth who have little or no regard for the Bible in biblical texts and offer them help in this.

b) Deepen biblical knowledge, learn to recognize biblical-theological connections and encourage knowledge of one's faith, school theological thinking and work toward the ability to make independent discernments.

c) With the Bible learn to live so that this molds not only the congregation but also the personality of the individual. Make it possible for youth and adults to discover the Bible together.

d) Learn to connect the Bible and life's situations and to experience biblical statements in regard to social, economic, societal and political situations and issues.

In order to do this work and to intensify that which has already been done, the EJB has at its disposal an office in Nuremberg for Evangelical (Protestant) youth work. Pastors, deacons and social educators work there. Youth work occurs to a great degree also through other organizations, such as the YMCA, Federation for Decisive Christianity, Christian Youth Federation and the Evangelical Rural Youth. In city congregations and deaneries (ca. 15-20 congregations make up a deanery) full-time youth leaders work and volunteer workers are schooled in biblical-theological seminars so that they too can lead youth groups.

But how can youth be evangelized and how can evangelization still take place between youth?

An important thread of contact could be a bridge built by correspondence. Using a card catalog organized by the year of birth, a carefully aimed plan of address by means of correspondence could be attempted for various events, such as church events, festivals, anniversaries. Alone the realization that one is known in the congregation, is an addressee, is to me very important.

Also a visiting service, "Youth visit youth," must be tried. Grounds for the visit could be birthdays (18th birthday), 5 year anniversary of confirmation, 16 or 18 year anniversary of baptism, but also invitation visits to a youth day or a special worship service. Congregational festivals, where one can participate without standing out too much, are also good opportunities. Another reason to visit would be to personally deliver the congregational letter, perhaps once a year. Also youth-oriented brochures could be used for a personal visit.

The connection to the house of God, to the church building, is for some of considerable emotional value. Also this connection to the worship service area (from baptism and confirmation, for example) could be encouraged.

In addition, working with children should be intensified. The strongly decreasing birthrate starting in the 1970's results in the fact that many clubs and organizations are trying very early to win and hold on to children for their organizations. Over the coming years youth from the baby boom era will have grown out of Protestant youth work. Therefore, more importance than ever before has been placed on working with children as the foundation for later youth work and as background experience for volunteer workers.

This is a large task which lies before us. We must talk with young people in youth evangelizations and win them for Christ. We must also make youth capable no matter where they stand of making it obvious that they believe in God. In my opinion the only way the tackling of this task makes any sense is if God himself gives us his blessing for it.

Udo Hahn (born in 1962, student of theology, freelance journalist for church newspapers and press services, deputy chairperson of the Landesjugend- konvent and speaker for the EJB, participant in the youth conference and the assembly of the Lutheran World Federation in Budapest)

****

Brief an den LWB Jugendreferat von Teilnehmer aus der Bundesrepublik an der Jugendvorvollversammlung (PAYG) in Budapest, Ungarn

Am 13./14. Juli sind die Teilnehmer der Jugendvorkonferenz (PAYG) aus den bundesdeutschen Mitgliedskirchen des Lutherischen Weltbundes zu einer Auswertungstagung der Jugendvorkonferenz und der Vollversammlung zusammengekommen. Da wir trotz aller Kritik an der Jugendvorkonferenz diese grundsätzlich für notwendig halten, möchten wir dem Jugendreferat für die Zukunft einige Anregungen und Vorschläge mitteilen:

1. Keine Ueberfrachtung der Jugendvorkonferenz!

- Die Jugendvorkonferenz hat gezeigt, dass die Auswahl der Themen zu vielfältig war, so dass die Voten der Jugendvorkonferenz in der Vollversammlung im Grunde in Allgemeinplätzen stecken blieben.

- Die dichtgedrängte Tagesordnung der Jugendvorkonferenz hat dazu geführt, dass wichtige informelle Gespräche nur in den knapp bemessenen Pausen möglich waren.

2. Es erscheint uns sinnvoll, zu Beginn einer Jugendvorkonferenz einen breiten Raum zu lassen für:

- Berichte aus den Weltregionen;

- Berichte aus den LWB-Kommissionen und Abteilungen über den aktuellen Diskussionsstand, um Informationsdefizite der Teilnehmer abzubauen und den Erfahrungsaustausch zu gewährleisten.

3. Die Jugendvorkonferenz sollte in einem zeitlichen Abstand zur Vollversammlung stattfinden; dadurch wird gewährleistet, dass die Beschlüsse der Jugendvorkonferenz in den Jugendverbänden und Mitgliedskirchen bekannt gemacht, diskutiert und unterstützt werden können.

   Wenn der LWB eine breite Mitwirkung von sogenannten jugendlichen Laien wünscht, sollte bedacht werden, dass z.B. Berufstätige von ihrem Arbeitgeber nicht für 4 Wochen in Folge freigestellt werden können.

4. Das Jugendreferat sollte die Mitgliedskirchen des LWB darauf hinweisen, dass Jugendteilnehmer an der Vollversammlung (Delegierte, Berater, Stewards) auch an der Jugendvorkonferenz teilnehmen müssen.

5. Insbesondere für die Teilnehmer, die Delegierte ihrer Kirchen an der Vollversammlung sind, ist es dringend notwendig, dass einer der Arbeitsschritte die Einführung in die formalen Gegebenheiten der Vollversammlung beinhaltet. Nur dadurch kann die Partizipation junger Menschen in den gegebenen Strukturen sichergestellt werden.

6. Um die konstruktive Teilnahme von Jugendlichen an der Mitarbeit des LWB zu ermöglichen, halten wir es für sinnvoll, die Mitgliedskirchen aufzufordern, zusammen mit den Jugendverbänden geeignete Jugendliche zur Teilnahme an LWB-Veranstaltungen auszuwählen (vgl. Beschluss 7.2.4. der 7. Vollversammlung des LWB in Budapest).

7. Wir haben das Exekutivkomitee gebeten, für das Jahr 1986 oder 1987 ein europäisches Jugendtreffen zu veranstalten. Wir bitten das Jugendreferat, dieses Projekt zu unterstützen, zu planen und durchzuführen.

Mit freundlichen Grüssen

gez. Uwe Arnhold
Hans-Christoph Hermes
Sabine Nabrotzky
Beate Weise
Udo Hahn
Klaus Ilsemann
Gabriele Waack
Harald Welge

Letter to the LWF Youth Desk from the PAYG delegates of the Federal Republic of Germany Translation by Ms. Margret Pater

The participants of the Pre-Assembly Youth Gathering (PAYG) from the member churches of the Lutheran World Federation in the Federal Republic of Germany met on July 13-14 to evaluate the Pre-Assembly Youth Gathering and the Assembly. Since, despite all of our criticism of the PAYG, we consider it to be fundamentally necessary, we should like to send the youth desk some suggestions and proposals for the future:

1. Do not overload the Pre-Assembly Youth Gathering!

- The Pre-Assembly Youth Gathering demonstrated that the choice of issues was so diverse that the contributions from the Youth Gathering to the Assembly were basically unable to go beyond a statement of general truths.

- The tightly packed agenda for the Pre-Assembly Youth Gathering meant that important informal discussions could only take place in the very limited breaks.

2. It would seem to us helpful to allow ample time at the beginning of a Youth Gathering for:

- reports from different regions of the world,

- reports from the LWF commissions and departments about the present stage in the discussions in order to enable the participants to be better informed and to promote an exchange of experience.

3. The Pre-Assembly Youth Gathering should take place some time before the Assembly; this would make it possible for the decisions of the Youth Conference to be made known to and discussed and supported by the youth organizations and member churches.

   If the LWF wishes to have significant cooperation of so-called young lay people, it should be remembered that, e.g. people in employment cannot obtain four successive weeks of leave from their employers.

4. The youth desk should inform the member churches of the LWF that youth participants at an Assembly (delegates, advisers, stewards) must also attend the Pre-Assembly Youth Gathering.

5. Especially for the participants who are delegates of their churches to the Assembly, it is extremely necessary for one of the elements of the work to be an introduction to the formal procedures of an Assembly. This is the only way to ensure that young people can participate in the established structures.

6. In order to facilitate the constructive participation of young people in the work of the LWF, we consider it would be helpful to invite the member churches in cooperation with the youth organizations to select suitable young people to participate in the events of the LWF (cf. resolution 7.2.4 of the 7th Assembly of the LWF in Budapest).

7. We have requested the Executive Committee to organize a European youth meeting in 1986 or 1987. We ask the youth desk to support, plan and carry out this project.

With best wishes,

(signed) Uwe Arnhold, Udo Hahn, Hans-Christoph Hermes, Klaus Ilsemann, Sabine Nabrotzky, Gabriele Waack, Beate Weise, Harald Welge

3rd ALL AFRICA YOUTH AND STUDENT ASSEMBLY, YAOUNDE, CAMEROON
September 4 -14, 1984

LETTER TO AFRICAN CHURCHES

We young African Christians coming from all regions of our continent and members of the same body called Church (Romans 12), extend our brotherly greetings to all African Churches.

We have met in Yaounde from 4 to 14 September 1984, in the faith that Jesus is dead and risen so that we might become children of freedom: we hereby reaffirm our conviction that we have an important and decisive role to play in the history of our continent for a better future of the African people.

We have come together here to share our experiences, evaluate our problems, and see together how we the youth can and must find solutions for the development of Africa: because we are aware that the fundamental problem about the future of our peoples and of our continent is that of its total liberation; this liberation being the key to our development.

It is a joy for us to send you the message of African Christian youth and to share our concerns and determination with you. The Church has appeared as an instrument of domination and oppression. We think that today, it must be given its real vocation again: that of being an instrument of liberation (Isaiah 61).

If we consider the situation of our countries, we are scared of the misery, the steady increase in refugees, the marginalization of the youth (though a majority group) which cannot creatively contribute in the development of Africa: because, it has become indifferent. Even now, the situation of women makes them appear as "inferior beings." We are also scared of reticence of our leaders to find viable solutions to our health and education problems: the instability of political regimes which put us more and more under the domination of foreign powers.

We notice that the majority of churches remain passive in the face of such a serious situation.

To a certain extent, this passivity comes from the lack of cooperation among them, and their individualism. Some churches support oppressive regimes and some even become their accomplices.

We the youth of the African Churches, are convinced that if such a situation continues, this will mean the failure of the church in its mission of witness on earth. So our vision of the church is that of a church which is rooted in our African realities, is united, generous, and in solidarity with the women and men of our continent. We want a free church which is not dependent on external powers, imported theologies or theologies which do not take into account the realities of our peoples.

We, therefore, formulate concrete proposals: we hope to see churches put them into practice by really integrating their youth in decision-making processes up to the highest levels. Didn't our Lord Jesus accomplish all his ministry in thirty three (33) years of his life?

We the youth of Africa, members of this great body which is the Church, want to see emerge this community of participation and sharing. We want it to involve all the components of our society: women, youth, handicapped, old people, for the advancement of the edification of the Kingdom announced by Christ.

We wish that the leading structures be renewed: that they no more reproduce the set, unjust and partisan structures of the world.

Education goes along with responsibility: it should aim at creating a new type of society. It should integrate our history as African Christians, our realities and our languages as media of irreplaceable values.

We request for family life education cleared of any narrow moralism and which would bring pertinent answers to the questions of our time.

Education will also aim at breaking the monopoly of theological knowledge and that of the myth of diplomas by making all the youth participate in the edification of community life as a whole, irrespective of their level of academic instruction.

We commit ourselves to work for a comprehensive development program conceived in common, whereby participation would be effective because it would not be imposed. Believing strongly that our peoples have valuable knowledge, convinced that they are created in the image of God, we ask that they be allowed to express their needs and be the active agents of their own development: it is their right and their duty. We condemn the sterility of theological thinking in development at grass root level and in relation to handicapped persons and social minorities: it is urgent that churches consider seriously the possibility of a grass root reflection on those problems.

We the youth of the African Churches, stress the necessity of a Pan-African society built from the concerted action of men and women. Therefore, we believe that a solid viable subregional and regional cooperation will emerge from unity and common work of churches and youth at local and national levels.

For us, this seems to be the Christian view, correct and African, which does not deny the richness of diversity, and which considers the forces in presence so as to solve the problems which divide us.

So we will be able to create a community of justice and solidarity, of peace and participation: a church of Christians who assume their prophetic role in society to liberate the African from any form of oppression, misery and ignorance.

By taking advantage of the experience of elders and of the energy of youth, the people of God in Africa will at last become this "great multitude which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues... they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more (Revelation 7:9 and 16).

Convinced that our message will be followed by real changes, we the young Christians of Africa expect from African Churches reactions and echoes allowing a new dialogue and common actions.

May the Peace of Christ be with you.

THE YAOUNDE COVENANT

1-PREAMBLE

We Christian young people and church youth leaders from 25 countries of Africa meeting under the auspices of the All Africa Conference of Churches from September 4-14, in Yaounde, Cameroon, make the following commitment based on the conclusions reached during our deliberations:

a - SPIRITUAL COMMITMENT: Having come to a deeper understanding of our situation through group study of the Word of God which enabled us to discover the link between faith and action, we have realized the need to bear truthful witness to Jesus Christ, through a Christian imperative for action in the economic, social and political spheres of life.

b - POLITICAL REALITY: Africa is torn apart by wars, ideologies a greedy, brutal and dehumanizing struggle for power, resulting in gross violation of human rights which in turn has created a large refugee community. The refugee problem represents but one facet of the general malaise on a continent which has lost direction and which is faced with a chronic leadership crisis. The greatest victims of this fluid and unpredictable political climate have been children and young people. Young Africans have lost confidence in their leaders and in themselves.

c - YOUTH AND WOMEN: We note with great concern that young people and women who constitute 60-70% of the population of most countries in Africa, have been denied participation in decision making and in processes of development. It is a grave injustice for the youth to be considered as the "Church of tomorrow" kept in cold storage until 'the fullness of time'. It is equally insulting for youth to be regarded as 'immature and irresponsible'. Youth are active participants in the processes today, and wherever they are given the opportunity they have proved their creativity and maturity.

d - EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT: We reaffirm the right of all peoples to formal education and to development from which the greater majority of the peoples of Africa are excluded, especially with regard to the determination of the content, processes and direction of development. The educational systems in most African countries prevent young people from developing a critical and committed awareness for their full participation in development.

e - THE CHURCH IN CONTEXT: The church as a social institution exhibits the limitations of the environmental framework in which it operates. Constantly harassed by repressive regimes, the Church in Africa has ceased to be a continuous prophetic voice which liberates people from all oppressive structures. Its schools which were the avant- garde for cadre formation in our societies, now reflect the shortcomings of the current governmental educational systems.

It is in the context of these historical realities that we solemnly make the following affirmations individually as a covenant between us, and collectively between us and God.

2-COMMITMENT

2.i Education For Liberation

Affirming that the church has a role to play in the building up of social structures which are more human, more just, and more respectful of human dignity and development, we commit ourselves to education for liberation in our continent which ensures human promotion, and draws from authentic African cultural values and historical reality. This type of education will aim at the emergence of persons who are no longer content just to passively accept their lot, but who, aware of their own possibilities become involved with others in the transformation of society.

Development is essentially a question of the evolution of mentalities and attitudes, and conscientisation is the bedrock of the process of authentic human promotion. This type of education must be largely informal and accessible to everyone, with youth and women being the avant-garde in this process as agents of change. This education for liberation must aim at creating the opportunity for the disabled to find fulfilment in society. It must help every child to find opportunities for initiative, creativity, self-realization and self- fulfilment.

We therefore propose the following programs guidelines:

a-Youth organizations should promote research in their own countries in order to discover African values and materials which might become useful tools in the education for liberation process.

b-Member Churches of AACC should help create Youth Advice Center for career counseling and family life education.

c-The marginalized rural youth, urban poor and the disabled should become the focus of our Education for Liberation Program. Such groups should be adequately represented in future Youth Assemblies and Conferences. Young Christians should also commit themselves to "each-one-teach-one" literacy programs.

d-To make education accessible to everyone, the churches should, with the assistance of the AACC Secretariat, promote "Catch-Up" schools, mass education and literacy programs, and media training programs through workshops and seminars for those excluded by the formal educational system.

e-The churches should adopt a strategy to have greater influence on the planning and content of curricula designed by the State, with the view of placing emphasis on practical formation and to promoting a spirit of research and creativity.

f-The AACC Secretariat should help organize a writing workshop to produce teaching and information materials with an African identity and set up the machinery for the dissemination of these materials.

g-The AACC should make more widely known the activities of the Selfhood of the Church and Frontier Ministries Program with the view of promoting the African identity.

h-The AACC should promote awareness of the existence of Ecumenical Institutes such as Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation for the training of young people in development.

2.ii Church and Human Rights

a-We ask the youth of Africa to commit themselves to a constructive program of pastoral care for our brothers and sisters who are refugees, to enable them to become fully integrated into our communities.

b-We commend the churches for their dedicated involvement in the refugee problem and we urge them to continue to draw up programs which highlight the root causes of the refugee problem to enable more people to participate meaningfully in the refugee program.

c-We recommend that Justice and Human Rights Desks be set up by member churches of the AACC and Christian Councils to further the work of human rights promotion and protection on our continent.

d-We recommend that the churches with the help of dedicated lawyers should organize free legal services for the victims of human rights violation.

e-Finally, we appeal to the churches to take a continuous and more courageous stand against all forms of injustices in our society as a constituent element of their mission of evangelization.

2.iii Regional Integration and Socio-Economic Cooperation

a-We believe that regional integration and socio-economic cooperation cannot be effective or beneficial to Africa without political liberation and unity. We therefore commit ourselves to programs which expose the colonial situation in Namibia and South Africa; capitalism's domination of our national economies through multinationals, and with the complicity of the national ruling elites; super-power rivalry and ideological prostitution which breeds political instability.

We commit ourselves to political integration which includes:

- cultural dialogue;
- control of African resources by African people;
- expansion of the local markets for intra-African trade;
- overcoming the apparent linguistic barriers by uniting around our common heritage of African realities, experiences and aspirations.

b-We commit ourselves to an interregional exchange program through which we shall learn about each other's cultural realities. This exchange will involve rural youth, young professionals and workers, the disabled, students, and should include a commitment to learn another language?

c-Our common faith in Jesus Christ makes it imperative for us as Christian youth to work together for human promotion. Such solidarity and cooperation is also necessary with those who do not profess the Christian faith but who acknowledge fundamental human values. We therefore urge Christian youth organizations to cooperate with non-Christian youth organizations and seek alliances with workers' unions for mutual education towards the promotion of social change and of regional integration.

d-We urge the church to help mobilize local credit finance through the development of cooperatives and rural banks which would be linked to the African Development Bank.

e-We affirm that development is an ideological issue, and note with concern that patterns of development on our continent have followed imported developmental models whose chief exponents are the ruling elites, alienating the majority of the people from the developmental process. We therefore commit ourselves to an African model of development which derives its main principles from Christian teaching rooted in our historical background and the ongoing evolution of our communities, for the realization of a just, peaceful, participatory and sustainable society.

2.iv Church and Youth

a-We rededicate ourselves to the churches mission of evangelization which necessarily includes solidarity and participation in the efforts of all those who are struggling to achieve complete liberation in every field - socio-economic, cultural and spiritual. In this context we urge all member churches of the AACC to help mobilize the youth for evangelization through the setting up of youth desks with trained full-time workers to coordinate the activities of young people.

b-We urge the General Committee of the AACC to appoint the coordinator of the AACC Youth Desk without any further delay.

c-We urge all Christian organizations working among youth on the continent, e.g. AACC, WSCF, PAX, ROMANA; YCS etc, to work together towards the drawing up of a common agenda for youth promotion.

d-We call upon the AACC Secretariat to assist the member churches of the AACC in the formation of regionally coordinated youth networks.

e-We finally recommend that the All Africa Youth And Student Assembly should be held once every five years, and that the AAYSA magazine be published by the Youth Desk of the AACC.

3-CONCLUSION

We make these recommendations and state these affirmations, critically aware of our limitations as young people, and the structures we have to contend with; but we are strengthened in our resolve by the Gospel of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, and by our knowledge of our God as a God of liberation who through His Son Jesus Christ makes us truly free.

This theological basis shall underline our commitment to promote a new Africa where men and women, old and young are more fraternal and more just to each other, a new Africa where "justice will roll down like waters and righteousness like an overflowing stream."

REPORT ON INTERNSHIP - GEORGE OSHIBA

This is my intern report from the Shepherd of Valley Lutheran Church, Langley, B.C. Canada. I took my "first" internship there from September 1, 1983 to June 24, 1984. Now I am taking my "second" one at Kuwamizu Lutheran Church in Kumamoto, Japan. It was a very special experience for me and my wife to have shared our faith with the people of the Shepherd of the Valley. I am very proud of my internship with them, and I appreciate the LWF support toward my travel expenses. I would like to report this with my last article named "Prospect Point" from a monthly newsletter of the church:

Time flies so fast! It's already time for me and Hyuon Jou to leave Canada and this is probably my last "Prospect Point". So this time I'd like to reflect on my internship and share with you our future task in Japan and Asia.

I have to confess that I were so timid because of my limited English ability that I could not function well as an intern pastor. Gradually, thanks to my good slang teachers, I've gained confidence in myself, though still struggling with the difficulties of the English language. I wish I could have more time here. But in Japan another internship is waiting for me, so I have to go. I truly appreciate that we could share our faith, our common concerns for peace and justice, and also our weakness and His strength during these 10 months. It was not an easy time for me, because I had been separated from my "better half" and were frustrated in solitude, struggling with English, knocked down by news that my friend committed suicide, preparing my sermons and articles and confirmation class, visiting families and hospitals.

But now I can say that it was also the time of Grace. Through these days God was always gracious to me and Hyuon Jou. We thank God for this fellowship with you. Your kindness has always been precious to us. As I wrote in my annual report, I now understand much better what Paul says in his letters: "We have many parts in the one body, and all these parts have different functions. In the same way, though we are many, we are one body in union with Christ, and we are all joined to each other as different parts of one body. ...Be happy with those who are happy, weep with those who weep. Have the same concern for everyone." (Rom. 12:4-5, 15-16a)

Paul had a strong sense of unity with Christ and oneness of Christians in Christ, so he could say "There is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, between slaves and free men, between men and women; you are all one in union with Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). This sense of unity and oneness is the most important thing for Paul and also for us. It is only Jesus Christ who can make us love each other across the walls of color, language, class and creed.

I and Hyuon Jou are now going back to Japan, where there are many social problems, e.g. social discrimination towards Korean people, slums, prostitution (not only in Japan, because, I am ashamed to admit, many Japanese travel in Asian countries to buy prostitutes), Yasukuni Shinto Shrine Movement (movement to enshrine spirits of Japanese who were killed in the battles of World War II), social welfare (the Government is always reluctant to develop social welfare programs; In Japanese history, Christians have greatly contributed in this area), and so on.

I am prepared to confront these situations and fight against such social injustice and discriminations as a Christian confessing the sovereignty of Christ over the world.

This is not my "last" 'Prospect Point'. I think I can inform you of Japanese situations with which we Japanese Christians are struggling and also of Asian situations in which Asian Christians are confessing their faith in Christ.

Please, remember us and pray for us, another part of one body, and let us confess our faith to our God and to this world. May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. "Pastor George"

I am most pleased that this new program was accomplished and I could get a good evaluation from the congregation of the Shepherd of the Valley and my supervising pastor Rev. Frank W. Schmitt. I would therefore like to ask you to develop this kind of good, international internship programs.

****

Report on visitation by a joint group of young Lutherans from the USA National Committee and LWF member churches to the USSR

"Es ist nicht die Zeit für spektakuläre Aktionen" by Udo Hahn

"Es ist nicht die Zeit spektakuläre Aktionen, um Christen in der UdSSR zu helfen, sondern vielmehr eine Zeit des Gebetes und des Versuchs, persönliche Kontakte zu knüpfen." Dr. Paul Wee, Generalsekretär des amerikanischen Nationalkomitees des Lutherischen Weltbundes (LWM, New York), und Luanne Deckard von der Abteilung für Kirchliche Zusammenarbeit des Weltbundes in Genf, vertraten diese Auffassung nach der Rückkehr von ihrer UdSSR-Reise. Beide hatten die Leitung über eine internationale LWB Jugenddelegation mit 17 Teilnehmern aus 7 Ländern, die in die Sowjetunion entsandt werden konnte. Auf dem Programm standen nicht nur touristische Attraktivitäten in Moskau, Leningrad, Vilnius/Litauen, Riga/Lettland und Tallinn/Estland, sondern auch der Besuch orthodoxer Priesterseminare und gemeinsame Gottesdienste mit lutheranischen Gemeinden.

Zeit der Vorbereitung

In Helsinki kamen die Jugendlichen aus den USA, Kanada, Norwegen, Brasilien, Indien, Jordanien und der Bundesrepublik Deutschland zusammen, um sich gemeinsam auf die Situation in der UdSSR vorzubereiten. Jaakko Launikari, Pastor in der lutherischen Kirche Finnlands und verantwortlich für Kontakte in die Sowjetunion, betonte, dass kein Besucher aus der westlichen Welt vorurteilsfrei in dieses Land komme. "Viele denken bei der UdSSR an eine unproduktive Wirtschaft, das inkarnierte Böse schlechthin, an ein nationales Gefängnis und, dass wirkliches Leben nur im Untergrund möglich ist," Launikari wörtlich. Diese Art von Mythologie müsse man aber über Bord werfen und sich stattdessen mit offenen Augen und Ohren auf die Realität einlassen, die ein viel differenzierteres Bild vermittle.

Uneinheitlich

Wer lutherische Kirchengemeinden im Baltikum besucht, wird sehr schnell grosse Unterschiede feststellen. So ist beispielsweise die Lutherische Kirche Litauens mit ihren 30.000 Migliedern in 27 Gemeinden und 12

Pastoren eine Minderheitskirche. Gleiches gilt für die Orthodoxe Kirche. Die Katholische Kirche ist dagegen mit ihren 2,6 Millionen Gläubigen in diesem altpolnischen Gebiet in der Mehrheit und zudem auch stark volksverwurzelt. Immer wieder kommt es daher zu Spannungen und sogar Verhaftungen katholischer Priester, die zu sehr von der polnischen Situation beeinflusst sind.

Bischof Jonas Kalvanas verwies darauf, dass die Lutherische Kirche Litauens aus 1/10 ihrer ursprünglichen Grösse zurückgegangen sei. Insbesondere der Zweite Weltkrieg hätte zu einem beinahe Verschwinden dieser Kirche beigetragen. Nicht nur Gemeindeglieder flohen, sondern auch Pastoren, manche wurden sogar verschleppt. "Dass es uns als Kirche trotzdem noch gibt, verdanken wir nicht der Theologie, sondern dem Gebet," Kalvanas wörtlich. Ein Wunder sei es, dass die Kirche trotz der atheistischen Propaganda noch nicht ausgestorben sei. "Dies beweist, dass Gott die Kirche baut und nicht der Mensch," meinte der Bischof, "und somit kann der Mensch die Kirche auch nicht abschaffen." Auf die gegenwärtige Situation bezogen, unterstrich Bischof Kalvanas die Notwendigkeit, dass die Kirchen im Baltikum untereinander zusammenhalten, dass die Mitgliedschaft im Lutherischen Weltbund ein Tor aus der Isolation geöffnet habe und dass es gelingen müsse, junge Theologen für den Dienst in der Kirche zu gewinnen. Letzteres stellt sich für die Litauische Kirche als ein kardinalsproblem heraus, dass es anders als in der lettischen und estnischen Kirche kein eigenes Seminar zur Theologenausbildung gibt. Jede der drei baltischen Republiken besitz und pflegt schliesslich ihre eigene Sprache.

Besonders beeindruckend waren die Aeusserungen über das ökumenische Klima in Litauen. "Praktische Oekumene" sei für die Stärkung aller Christen wichtig, auch wenn theologisch um jeden i-Punkt gestritten werde. Nach den Verkündigungsinhalten und den Aktivitäten in den Gemeinden befragt, antwortete der Bischof: "Als ich im Westen war, hörte ich nur, wie in den Kirchen Probleme gepredigt wurden. Meine Gemeindeglieder würden sagen, das lese ich alles in der Zeitung, wir aber wollen das Evangelium hören. Und so gibt es für uns als Kirche keine Möglichkeit, etwas über Politik zu sagen. Aber nicht anders ist es den ersten Christen gegangen. In unserer Kirche können wir das Wort Gottes frei verkündigen und selbst im Krankenhaus sind Abendmahlsfeiern möglich. Schliesslich finden wir im Neuen Testament auch nichts über dem römischen Kaiser Nero."

Höhepunkte des Besuchs in der Litauischen Kirche war ein Abendmahlsgottesdienst in der orthodoxen Heilig-Geist-Kirche in Valnius, den Bischof Jonas Kalvanas hielt. An ihm nahmen sogar orthodoxe Priester und Gemeindeglieder teil und hatten nicht einmal Einwände als eine amerikanische Pastorin das Abendmahl austeilte. In diesem Gottesdienst war ein Hauch von Oekumene zu spüren, auf die wir uns im Westen erst noch zubewegen müssen.

Mit rund 30.000 Gläubigen weist die Lettische Kirche die grösste Gemeindegliederzahl auf. Der wegen Krankheit verhinderte Erzbischof Janis Matulis konnte die Delegation zwar nicht empfangen, wies jedoch in einem Grusswort auf die Bedeutung des Zustandekomens dieser Reise hin und betonte, wie wichtig Kontakte nach aussen seien.

In Gesprächen mit Gemeindegliedern wurde immer wieder unterstrichen, dass es für Christen keine Probleme in diesem Staat gebe. Durch die Verfassung sei Glaubensfreiheit garantiert und somit könne jeder an das Glauben was er möchte. Solange innerhalb der Kirchenmauern keine Politik betrieben werde, gebe es keine Schwierigkeiten. Kirchlich engagierte Christen sind

jedoch besorgt über die wachsende Zahl gerade junger Menschen, die sich östlichen religiösen Kulten, etwa Indien, verstärkt zuwenden. Ob Christsein nicht in eine Isolation führe, wird durchgehend verneint. Im Gegenteil: damit bestehe doch die Möglichkeit, anderen Menschen vorzuleben, was Christsein heisst und am lebenden Individuum zeigen, dass damit nichts Negatives verbunden ist. Bei allem Optimismus, der in solchen Aeusserungen zu hören war, ist doch eines Tatsache. Wer sich zu seinem Christsein bekennt, kann keine berufliche Karriere anstreben. "Lieber aber mit offenem Visier sich als Christ zu erkennen geben, als im Verborgenen zu leben und immer wieder zu Kompromissen gezwungen zu sein," lautet die eindeutige Devise.

Die estnische Kirche unter Erzbischof Edgar Hark ist mit rund 250.000 Gliedern nur unwesentlich kleiner als die lettische Kirche. Aehnlich wie in den Kirchengemeinden in der Bundesrepublik macht sich hier ein schleichender Erosionsprozess bemerkbar. Wohlstandsdenken und berufliches Erfolgsstreben lassen so manchen der Kirche eine Absage erteilen. Und dennoch: "Alle Christen schwimmen bei uns an der Oberfläche," bemerkte ein kirchlicher Vertreter. "Wer bei uns Kirchensteuern bezahlt, hält sich wirklich zur Kirche. In der Bundesrepublik gibt es dagegen viele U-Boot-Christen, die vielleicht das Reservoir der Kirche für die Zukunft darstellen. Wir haben keine derartigen Reserven." Friedensarbeit wird in der estnischen Kirche gross geschrieben. Staatliche und kirchliche Bemühungen gehen dabei Hand in Hand, wird mit Stolz berichtet. Schliesslich sei trotz unterschiedlicher Methoden das Ziel doch dasselbe.

Isolierte Lutheraner

Pastor Harald Kalnins, Superintendent für die deutschen evang.-luth. Gemeinden in der UdSSR mit Sitz in Riga/Lettland, wurde neugierig über die Situation der Lutheraner in den asiatischen Republiken befragt. Demnach gebe es derzeit 456 Gemeinden, 222 seien registriert. Kalnins grösster Wunsch ist es, dass sich alle Gemeinden registrieren lassen, da der Staat gegenwärtig eine grosse Offenheit gegenüber diesen Gemeinden zeige. "Wir sind Gott dankbar, dass er uns nun eine Tür geöffnet hat und es ist jetzt an uns, durch diese TÜr hindurchzugehen," meinte der Superintendent. Viele Gemeinden und Gruppen liessen sich jedoch aus Angst nicht registrieren, die Lage der Christen könne sich wieder verschlechtern. Schliesslich sei die UdSSR ein atheistischer Staat und man könne nicht wissen, wie sich die Situation entwickelt. "Ich kann guten Gewissens sagen," eröffnete Kalnins, "dass in den 19 Jahren, seit ich diesen Dienst versehe, es keine Restriktionen für mich gegeben hat und dass in den deutschen Gemeinden keiner wegen seines Glaubens ins Gefängnis gekommen ist. Es gibt keine Probleme solange wir nicht anfangen Politik zu machen und die Kirche zu missbrauchen." Für die deutschsprachigen Gemeinden in den asiatischen Republiken sei es besonders wichtig, sich als Kirche zu konstituieren und die Ausbildung von Theologen zu organisieren. Darüber liefen derzeit ernsthafte Verhandlungen mit den offiziellen Stellen. Vehement verwahrte sich Kalnins gegen jede Art materieller Hilfe von aussen. Diese Art von Hilfe werde nicht gebraucht, da es den Gemeinden gut gehe. "Was wir allerdings dringend brauche, sind Bibeln, Agenden, Katechismen und Liederbücher sowie Menschen, die für uns beten und von aussen mit uns Kontakt aufnehmen."

Eindringlich mahnte Superintendent Kalnins, so objektiv wie möglich zu Hause zu berichten, da im Westen allviele Gerüchte kursierten und Besucher oftmals hinter ihren Fragen bereits fertige Antworten hätten ohne auf die wirkliche Antwort zu hören.

Eindrücke

Jeder, der ein fremdes Land besucht, wird nach seiner Rückkehr ein persönliches Bild gewonnen haben, das Wiedersprüche mit einschliesst. Nicht anders erging es den Teilnehmern an dieser Delegation. Das Bild das man sich machen kann, ist so uneinheitlich wie die Informationen, die man erhält. Wiedersprüche lassen sich - noch - nicht auflösen. Wichtig wäre daher für den Lutherischen Weltbund, eine zentralstelle zu errichten, die Informationen über das kirchliche Leben im sozialistischen Osteuropa sammelt und weitergibt. Wer sich augenblicklich informieren will, stösst zwar auf eine Vielzahl von Angeboten, doch zeigt sich sehr schnell, dass die Informationen von unterschiedlicher Qualität sind. Im Blick auf eine solide Arbeit, sollte gerade dieser Mangel behoben werden.

Zur Lage der Christen in der UdSSR lässt sich sagen, dass sie auf der einen Seite zu den produktivesten und zuverlässigsten Arbeitern zählen, die nicht mehr wegzudenken sind, doch auf der anderen Seite sind sie immer noch mit dem Makel der Staatsfeindlichkeit behaftet, ein Vorurteil, das wider besseres Wissens nachwievor aufrecht erhalten wird.

40 Jahre nach dem Kriegsende ist es noch immer nicht leicht, ohne Last dieses Land zu besuchen. Die Mauer der Vorbehalte ist zwar noch gross, doch an einigen Stellen bereits aufgebrochen. Dass es kaum intensive Kontakte zu den deutschsprachigen Gemeinden in den asiatischen Republiken gibt, ist sicher mit darauf zurückzuführen, dass man aus Angst, es könne von der Bundesrepublik oder der DDR aus über das Baltikum unter den Deutschen in Sibirien und Kasachstan ein neues Nationalgefühl mit schwerwiegenden Folgen geweckt werden, von staatlicher Seite vieles blockiert. Vielleicht ist es auch sinnvoll, an diesem heiklen Punkt zu überlegen, ob nicht von weniger belasteten Kirchen Kontakt mit jenen Christen aufgenommen werden könnte. Nicht um die vielzitierte Verantwortung aufzugeben, sondern um sie in augenblicklich hilfreichere Hände zu übergeben.

Viele Christen setzen in der UdSSR ihre Hoffnungen auf den neuen Staatschef Gorbatschow, dem man eine Reihe wichtiger Reformen zutraut sowie auf den neuen Staatssekretär für Kirchenfragen. Bleibt zu hoffen, dass in einem Klima des Vertrauens echte Fortschritte erzielt werden können.

"This is not the time for spectacular action"

by Udo Hahn translation, Ms. Margret Pater

"This is not the time for spectacular action to help Christians in the USSR, but rather a time for prayer and for attempts to establish personal contacts." Dr. Paul Wee, the General Secretary of the US National Committee for the Lutheran World Federation (LWM, New York), and Luanne Deckard of the Department of Church Cooperation of the LWF in Geneva made this point on their return from their visit to the USSR. They were both responsible for leading an international youth delegation with 17 participants from 7 countries which had been sent to visit the Soviet Union. The program did not only include tourist attractions in Moscow, Leningrad, Vilnius (Lithuania), Riga (Latvia) and Tallinn (Estonia) but also visit to Orthodox seminaries for priests and joint services with Lutheran parishes.

Time for preparation

The young people from the USA, Canada, Norway, Brazil, India, Jordan and the Federal Republic of Germany met in Helsinki to prepare themselves together for the situation in the USSR. Jaakko Launikari, a pastor of the Lutheran Church in Finland and responsible for contacts in the Soviet Union, emphasized that no visitor from the Western world came to this country without prejudices. "Many think of the USSR as an unproductive economy, as nothing more than the incarnation of evil, as a national prison and think that true life is only possible in an "underground" form," to quote Launikari. He said that this sort of mythology must be thrown overboard and one must keep one's eyes and ears open instead to grasp reality which comprised many different nuances.

No uniformity

Anyone who visits Lutheran parishes in the Baltic region will very quickly observe major differences. Thus, for example, the Lutheran Church of Lithuania with its 30,000 members in 27 parishes and its 12 pastors is a minority church. The same applies there for the Orthodox Church. Whereas the Catholic Church with its 2.6 million faithful in this former Polish area constitutes the majority and is also deeply rooted in the nation. For this reason tensions arise repeatedly and Catholic priests are even arrested when they are too much influenced by the Polish situation.

Bishop Jonas Kalvanas pointed out that the Lutheran Church of Lithuania had shrunk to 1/10 of its original size. The II World War in particular had contributed to making this church almost disappear. It was not only church members who fled but pastors as well, and some were even dragged away. "We owe the fact that we still exist as a church not to theology but to prayer," to quote Kalvanas. He said that it was a miracle that the church had not yet died out despite the atheistic propaganda. "This proves that it is God who builds the church and not human beings," claimed the bishop, "and so human beings cannot do away with the church either." Referring to the situation today Bishop Kalvanas underlined the necessity for the churches in the Baltic region to stick together; membership of the Lutheran World Federation had opened a door to overcome isolation and it was important to succeed in winning young theologians for service in the church. This latter was the key problem for the Lithuanian Church which, unlike the Latvian and Estonian Churches, does not have its own seminary for theological education. Finally, each of the three Baltic republics has and treasures its own language.

The comments on the ecumenical atmosphere in Lithuania were particularly impressive. "Practical ecumenism" was important to strengthen all Christians, even if there were theological disputes about all the details. When asked about the content of the preaching and the activities in the parishes, the bishop replied, "When I was in the West I only heard sermons about problems in the churches. The members of my church would say: I can read about all of that in the newspapers, but we want to hear the Gospel. And so we as a church do not have the possibility to discuss politics. But the situation of the early Christians was not different from ours. In our church we can preach the Word of God freely and communion services are even possible in the hospitals. After all, we do not find anything in the New Testament about the Roman emperor, Nero."

The climax of the visit to the Lithuanian Church was a service of Holy Communion in the Orthodox Church of the Holy Spirit in Vilnius led by

Bishop Jonas Kalvanas. It was even attended by some Orthodox priests and members of the parish who did not even object when an American woman pastor distributed the elements. You could sense a breath of ecumenism in this service for which we in the West still have a long way to go.

With about 300,000 members the Latvian Church is the most numerous. Although the Archbishop, Janis Matulis, was prevented by illness from receiving the group, his greeting pointed to the significance that this visit was taking place and emphasized how important it was to have outside contacts.

In our conversations with church members they repeatedly underlined that there were no problems for Christians in this state. The freedom of religion was guaranteed by the constitution and thus everyone could believe whatever he/she liked. Provided that no one engaged in politics within the walls of the church, there were not difficulties. However, active Christians are worried about the growing number particularly of younger people who are increasingly turning to Eastern religious cults, for example from India. It was firmly denied that being a Christian led to isolation. On the contrary, we were told that this provided the possibility of demonstrating to other people in one's life what it means to be a Christian and the living individual can show that this does not imply anything negative. Despite all of the optimism expressed in such statements, one thing is a fact. Those who admit publicly that they are Christians cannot expect to make a career. "But it is better to play one's Christianity with open cards than to live in hiding and constantly be compelled to compromise," was clearly their slogan.

The Estonian Church under Archbishop Edgar Hark with about 250,000 members is not much smaller than the Latvian Church. Here a gradual process of erosion can be observed, comparable to the situation in the parishes of the Federal Republic of Germany. A desire for material comfort and professional success causes many people to turn their backs on the church. And yet, "In our country all the Christians swim on the surface," as one representative of the church remarked. "Those who pay church taxes here really do support the church. But in the Federal Republic of Germany there are many submarine Christians who may constitute the reservoir of the church for the future. We have no such reserves." The Estonian Church places great emphasis on working for peace. They reported proudly that the efforts of the church and of the state went hand in hand. Although the methods might differ, the goal was after all the same.

Isolated Lutherans

Pastor Harald Kalnins, the superintendent of the German Lutheran congregations in the USSR with his headquarters in Riga, Latvia, had to answer many questions about the situation of the Lutherans in the Asian republics. He reported that at the present time there are 456 parishes of which 222 are registered. Kalnins' greatest wish is that all the parishes get themselves registered because the state is showing great openness for these congregations at the present time. "We are grateful to God that He has now opened a door for us and now it is up to us to go through this door," said the superintendent. But there are many congregations and Christians who do not apply for registration for fear that the situation of the Christians might get worse again. After all, the USSR is an atheistic state and you never know how the situation may develop. "I can say in good conscience," Kalnins declared, "that in the 19 years since I began this ministry I have not been subjected to any restrictions and that no

one from the German congregations has been put into prison because of his/her faith. We have no problems as long as we refrain from political activity and from misusing the church." He said that it was particularly important for the congregations in the Asian republics to come together to form a church and to organize training for theologians. Serious negotiations on this were under way at present with the official bodies. Kalnins vehemently rejected the idea of material aid from outside. This sort of help was not necessary because the congregations were well off. "But what we do urgently need are bibles, lectionaries, catechisms and hymn books as well as people who will pray for us and establish contacts from outside."

Superintendent Kalnins firmly insisted that our reports back home should be as objective as possible because all kinds of rumours circulated in the West and visitors often came with ready-made answers behind their questions instead of listening to the real answers.

Impressions

Everyone who visits a foreign country goes home with his/her own personal impression which includes contradictions. The same applied to the members of this delegation. The picture that you get is as multifaceted as the information which you receive. The contradictions cannot - yet - be resolved. Therefore it would be important for the Lutheran World Federation to have a central office to collect and disseminate information about the life of the churches in Eastern Europe. Anyone looking for information at present will find that there is plenty available but it very quickly becomes obvious that the quality of the information varies considerably. In order for good work to be done this gap needs to be filled.

With reference to the situation of Christians in the USSR it can be said that they are counted among the most productive and reliable workers whose absence is hard to imagine, but on the other hand they still bear the mark of hostility to the state, a prejudice which is still maintained despite evidence to the contrary.

40 years after the end of the war it is still not easy to visit this country unburdened. Although there is still a high wall of prejudices, it has already been pierced at certain points. The fact that there are hardly any close contacts with the German speaking congregations in the Asian republics is certainly also due to the fear that a new sense of nationalism with serious consequences might be stimulated among the Germans in Siberia and Kazakstan from the Federal Republic or the German Democratic Republic via the Baltic region, and this causes the state to prevent many things. Perhaps it would be wise to consider for this sensitive point whether it would be better for churches which are less suspect to establish contacts with those Christians, not in order to evade the responsibility which is often mentioned but to entrust it to hands which may be more able to help at present.

Many Christians in the USSR have great hopes of the new head of state, Gorbatchev, who is expected to introduce a series of significant reforms, and of the new state secretary for church affairs. We can only hope that genuine progress can be made in an atmosphere of confidence.

****

ERFOLGE IM KLEINEN, IMMER NOCH PROBLEME IM GROSSEN

Frauen-Konferenz in Nairobi/Kenia - Auch Kirchen sind gefordert von Sabine RÜdiger-Hahn (Die Autorin war als Jugenddelegierte des LWB in Nairobi dabei)

Nairobi/Kenia - Das von den Vereinten Nationen ausgerufene Jahrzehnt der Frau (1976-85) ist vorbei - die Arbeit geht trotzdem weiter. Dieses vorläufige Fazit kann man nach der Forum-Konferenz der nicht-staatlichen Organisationen (NGO) in Nairobi vom 10.-19. Juli 1985 ziehen. 8000 Frauen aus aller Welt waren zusammengekommen, um Rückblick zu halten, ob sich die Lage der Frau verbessert hat und um Strategien für die Zukunft anzudenken.

Eine Plattform boten Podiumsveranstaltungen und Arbeitsgruppen, die einem schnell das Bild eines riesigen Marktes der Möglichkeiten boten, wie man es etwa von deutschen Kirchentagen her kennt. Schnell verlor man daher auch den Ueberblick und nicht zuletzt kämpfte man allerorts mit Sprachproblemen.

Das NGO-Forum war ein Sammelbecken für Frauengruppen, das alle nur erdenklichen Extreme mit beinhaltete. Im Vordergrund standen der Austausch von Informationen und das gemeinsame Gespräch. Davon profitierten die Besucher am meisten, blieb für den einzelnen zumeist nur wenig Greifbares übrig, je grösser die Veranstaltung war. Positiv wirkte sich aus, dass kein Zwang herrschte, beschlussfähige Papiere produzieren zu müssen, wenngleich man sich erhoffte, Impulse in die UNO-Konferenz vom 16.-26. Juli, die ebenfalls in Nairobi stattfand, geben zu können.

Lässt man die letzten zehn Jahre Revue passieren, so lauteten die Hauptziele "Gleichheit, Entwicklung, Frieden" mit den Unterthemen "Arbeit, Gesundheit, Erziehung". Heute gilt die wichtige Einsicht, diese Bereiche nicht isoliert, sondern in einer Beziehung miteinander zu sehen. Zwar hat sich - und das lässt sich global behaupten und nachweisen - für Frauen weltweit etwas bewegt. Fortschritte sind allerdings in der westlichen Welt ungleich besser zu greifen als in der Dritten Welt. Als Hindernisse erweisen sich immer noch traditionelle Verhaltensweisen, die Geringschätzung von Frauenfragen, die schlechte wirtschaftliche Situation der Frauen und nicht zuletzt der Unfrieden auf der Welt. Erfolge, so wurde bei dieser Konferenz demonstriert, lassen sich im kleinen fast überall nachweisen. Die grossen Probleme sind damit jedoch noch immer ungelöst.

Bei einem Resümee wird man daher immer unterscheiden müssen zwischen Fortschritten auf der nationalen, internationalen und regionalen Ebene. Diese Unterscheidung im Auge zu behalten, ist für die Entwicklung zukünftiger Strategien besonders wichtig.

Berücksichtigt werden muss meiner Meinung nach auch, dass wir heute in einer Umbruchsituation leben, die alle gesellschaftlichen Lebensformen und Strukturen betrifft. Deutlich wurde mir dies beim Besuch einer keniatischen Durchschnittsfamilie mit sieben Kindern in einer kleinen Neubauwohnung am Stadtrand von Nairobi. Die Eltern arbeiten, um so die Voraussetzungen zu schaffen, dass alle ihre Kinder eine gute Erziehung und Ausbildung bekommen, besonders auch die Mädchen. Dabei zeigen sich Konflikte, wenn es um des vermeintlichen Wohles der Kinder willen darum geht, Traditionelles aufzugeben. Im Mittelpunkt steht immer wieder die Frau, die sich in auseinandersetzungen immer wieder als die Schwächere erweist.

Besonders wichtig war für mich die Erkenntnis, dass vor allem die Frauen aus den Ländern der Dritten Welt, in ihrer ganzen Arbeit nicht nur religiös motiviert sind, sondern ihre Glaubenserfahrungen auch als feste Grundlage und Antrieb ihres Handelns verstehen.

Auch die Kirche kann sich der angesprochenen Probleme nicht verschliessen, die längst nicht nur die Frauen allein, sondern ebenso die Familie betreffen.

Der Lutherische Weltbund und der Oekumenische Rat der Kirchen waren jeweils mit Delegationen in Nairobi vertreten. Längst haben diese Organisationen die Frauenarbeit entdeckt und als wichtiges Arbeitsfeld begriffen. Die Aufgabe der Kirchen ist es, einer glaubwürdigen Gemeinschaft von Männern und Frauen Ausdruck zu verleihen, sich für eine Veränderung von unsinnigen Strukturen, die Abschaffung von Vorurteilen und gegen die Diskriminierung aufgrund von Geschlecht, Rasse oder sozialer Schicht einzusetzen. Diesen positiven Veränderungsprozess einmal innerhalb der Kirche buchstäblich vorzuführen, hatte man so in Nairobi nicht geplant. Deutlich wurde: Auf die Kirchen werden positive Hoffnungen bei der zukünftigen Arbeit um durchgreifende Verbesserungen für die Frauen gesetzt.

Für die Bundesrepublik könnte dies bedeuten, noch entschiedener gegen den Prostitutionstourismus nach Fernost und das Feilbieten von asiatischen Frauen in Katalogen von Eheinstituten. Hier werden in eklatanter Weise finanzielle Nöte ausgenützt und die Menschenrechte verletzt. Bleibt zu hoffen, dass die Kirchen hier glaubwürdige Zeichen setzen können.

Zu Gast bei einer keniatischen Familie

Willkommen zum Frauenforum

ACHIEVEMENT REACHED IN SMALL WAYS, PROBLEMS STILL WITH IMPORTANT THINGS

Women's Conference in Nairobi/Kenya - Churches are also challenged by Sabine Rüdiger-Hahn (The author was a LWF Youth Delegate in Nairobi) Translation: Birgitta Voltenauer

Nairobi/Kenya - The women's decade (1976 - 1985) as proclaimed by the United Nations is over - the work still continues. This preliminary conclusion can be drawn from the Forum Conference of the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) in Nairobi from July 10-19, 1985. 8000 women from all over the world came together to survey whether the situation for women has improved or not and to contemplate strategies for the future.

A platform was offered by stage events and working groups, which quickly presented a picture of a huge market of possibilities, like the ones we are used to from the German "Kirchentag". Therefore, one very quickly lost perspective and in addition had to struggle with language problems on all sides.

The NGO forum was an assembly of womens' groups that contained all imaginable extremes. Mainly this was an exchange of information and joint discussions. The visitors profited mostly by this but only little materialized for individuals depending on the size of the event. A positive factor was that there was no pressure to produce conclusions, although there were hopes of giving impulses to the UN-Conference which also took place in Nairobi, from July 16-26, 1985.

If you review the past ten years, the main goals were "equality, development, peace" with the subthemes, "work, health, education". Today we do not view these areas individually but in relation to each other. Some things have changed for women all over the world - this is globally evident and can be proved. However, improvements are much more evident in the Western World than in the Third World. Traditional attitudes, e.g. disrespect for women's problems, the bad economic situation of the women and last but not least the unrest in the world, still turn out to be the main obstacles for development. As demonstrated by this conference, achievements are reached in small ways almost everywhere. The big problems are, however, still unsolved.

In reviewing the situation one, therefore, always has to distinguish between development on a national, international and regional level. It is especially important to take this difference into account when considering the development of future strategies.

In my opinion one has to consider the fact that we are today living in a changing world that concerns all ways of existence and structures. This became very apparent to me while visiting an average Kenyan family with several children, living in a new flat on the outskirts of Nairobi. Both parents are working to enable all their children, especially the girls, to get a good education. In so doing there are many conflicts about what is supposed to be good for the children, especially when they have to give up traditional ways of living. In the center there is always the woman, who in case of an argument, is the weaker part.

It was especially important for me to note how the women from the Third World were motivated by their religion in carrying out their tasks and also used their experience of faith as a basis for this. The church cannot

close their minds to these problems which concern not only the women, but the whole family.

Both the Lutheran World Federation and the World Council of Churches were represented by delegations in Nairobi. Both of these organizations have long ago discovered women's work and understand it to be an important field of activity. The task of the churches is to give the cooperation between men and women a credible expression, to engage in a change of unreasonable structures, the abolishment of prejudices and discrimination because of sex, race or social standing. The plan in Nairobi was not to demonstrate these changes within the church so literally. However, it became obvious that there were positive hopes for the future work of the churches to drastically improve the situation for women.

In the Federal Republic of Germany this could mean to take definite steps against the "tourist prostitution" in the Far East and against the wedding institutes offering for sale asiatic women by catalogue. Here is a striking example of exploiting financial needs and violating human rights. Let's hope that the churches can set a good example here.

****

TEN SING MOVEMENT IN NORWAY, BUT NOT ONLY FOR NORWAY

The Ten Sing choir in the "Small Church" of the Slovak Evangelical Church in Czechoslovakia

In the Norwegian Lutheran Church (Church of Norway) there is a large youth movement called Ten Sing. Approximately 200 groups of teenagers throughout the whole contry, being also a part of the Norwegian YMCA/YWCA, come together following their very specific task. The common feature of these groups is that they present a very positive Christianity in song, drama, dance, ballet, etc. In Norway this movement has been of tremendous value for the youth work in the church and many church leaders today have been active members in this movement during their youth.

In connection with the International Youth Year the YMCA/YWCA, together with the Church of Norway, arranged a European Tour in late July with a National Ten Sing group. This group was formed especially for this purpose and consisted of 47 singers and 5 technicians. The youth desk of the LWF was involved financially in this program and we are very grateful for this international engagement of Ten Sing especially in this particular year. This international orientation of Ten Sing in this year is no exception. It belongs to the tradition of this movement. We are happy to submit to you the report from their European Tour, as it was sent to our desk by the participants. After having read it, you will agree, I am sure, that these kinds of activities of church youth groups are very much needed in our days, because they enrich not only guests and hosting congregations, but also all of us who hear about it later.

NORWEGIAN TEN SING'S SUMMER TOUR

Around the 20th of July a busful of Norwegian Ten Singers (47 persons plus a minibus with 5 technicians) left Oslo with destination Euromeet in Oberschuetzen, Austria.

The choir consisted of members from local Ten Sing choirs in Eastern Norway, and the program was a joint effort. The group had been asked to give a concert at Euromeet - the theme for the evening: Sharing. In addition to the Euromeet concert, the group had been invited to sing in Bratislava and Budapest - or rather a small village outside Budapest called Pilis.

We were very well received in Bratislava as guests of the official Evangelical Church. The congregation filled the church to the last seat and joined in on some of our songs. After the evening service we were together with the congregation in the church garden.

If the reception in Bratislava was a very warm one, the reception in Pilis and the surrounding congregations was overwhelming. We were served an abundance of excellent food and were taken care of as if we were something very special. The choir was invited to sing at a wedding - which we did - and our director got to kiss the bride. We were shown around in the various congregations - especially the Old Peoples Home in Pilis was impressive. It is run by the congregation and had approximately 20 residents.

We found a lot of new friends and contacts both in Bratislava and Pilis. It was very interesting to talk to the members of the various congregations, and we do hope to be able to return their hospitality.

Our last stop was at The World Council Meeting of the YMCA. Although we had to postpone our concert for a few hours until about 11 at night, the meeting hall was full. After the concert we got the firm impression that the Ten Sing idea really caught on.

For most of the young choir members this was their first trip to Eastern Europe. It made a profound impression on them that they were able to make friends across the boarders of the socialist countries. We certainly hope to be able to renew the warm friendships we established with our fellow Christians.

****

CHRISTEN UND ATHEISTEN IM GESPRAECH

Lutherischer Weltbund entsandte Delegation zu Weltjugendfestspielen in Moskau von Udo Hahn

Moskau/Genf - Mit vielen unterschiedlichen Eindrücken kehrte eine Delegation des Lutherischen Weltbundes (LWB) von den Weltjugendfestspielen zurück, die vom 26.7. - 3.8.1985 in Moskau unter dem Motto "Für anti-imperialistische Solidarität, Frieden und Freundschaft" stattfanden. Den Weltbund repräsentierten unter der Leitung von Pfr. Julius Filo (CSSR), dem neuen Jugendkoordinator in Genf, auch Jugendliche aus Jordanien, den USA und der Bundesrepublik Deutschland.

Besonders hervorzuheben, so meinten die Teilnehmer nach ihrer Rückkehr, sei die gastfreundliche Aufnahme gewesen und die Tatsache, dass sich wie bei keinen Weltjugendfestspielen zuvor, so viele junge Christen sich aktiv beteiligen konnten. Schliesslich hätten Christen ja eine qualitative Stimme in die Diskussion um Frieden und Gerechtigkeit auf der Welt mit einzubringen.

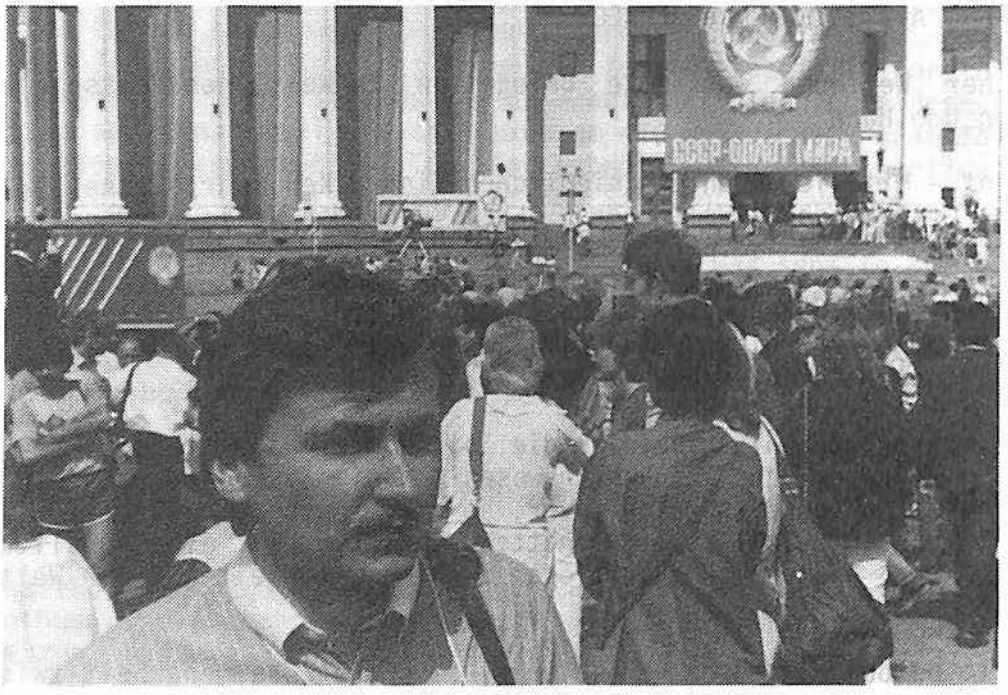
Julius Filo betonte in einem Redebeitrag, dass die Zusammenarbeit zwischen Christen und Atheisten bei der Friedensthematik keineswegs neu sei, sondern längst als Notwendigkeit erlebt wurde. Nur wenn sich alle zusammenschliessen, könne überhaupt ein Erfolg erreicht werden. Der christliche Beitrag, so Filo, sei umso nützlicher, je fester die Menschen im Glauben an Jesus Christus verankert seien und das Kreuz der Nachfolge auf sich nehmen. Dies habe auch Auswirkungen auf das Verhalten zu jenen, die sich als Atheisten verstehen. "Es ist traurig," Julius Filo wörtlich, "dass die Gaben Gottes von so vielen abgelehnt werden und Spannungen bis in die Familien hinein auftreten." Als Beitrag der Christen zum Frieden sieht der zukünftige Jugendkoordinator des Weltbundes, dass man als erster die Hand zur Versöhnung reichen solle, auch wenn der andere schuldig sei.

Probleme hatten allerdings nicht wenige Teilnehmer bei den Rundtischgesprächen mit der Tatsache, dass es den Kirchen in der UDSSR nicht möglich sei, ausserhalb der Kirchenmauern das Evangelium zu verkündigen, umgekehrt aber der Staat das Recht zu antireligiöser Propaganda habe. Gerade um diesen Sachverhalt und die unterschiedlichen Auffassungen zur Religionsfreiheit haben sich immer weider nützliche Gespräche ergeben.

Dankbar war man für die Möglichkeit, sich eingehend über das Leben der Russ.-Orth. Kirche zu informieren, die ausserhalb der Festspiele für ein umfangreiches Programmangebot sorgte. Schliesslich bot sich auch die Gelegenheit, an einem Gottesdienst der Moskauer Baptistengemeinde teilzunehmen.

Im Blick auf zukünftige Weltjugendfestspiele wünschte man sich in der LWB-Delegation einen neutralen Konferenzort, da für andere Delegationen so manches politisch brisante Problem hätte vermieden werden können. Wichtig

ist, dass sich zukünftig noch mehr Christen und christliche Vereinigungen zur Teilnahme entschliessen, um einen noch wirkungsvolleren Beitrag einbringen zu können und vielleicht selbst auch als Programmanbieter aufzutreten. In diesem Zusammenhang empfielt sich ebenso eine bessere Koordination und Vorbereitung der christlichen Teilnehmer an solchen Festspielen, um dieser Stimme noch mehr Gehör zu verleihen.



Attending one of the open air activities

The chair in the round-table discussion on "Christians and Atheists for peace"

SOARING OR STRUGGLING?

Reflections on the 12th World Festival of Youth and Students, Moscow, July 27 - August 3 by Joan Löfgren

At the end of the opening ceremony of the World Festival of Youth and Students, flocks of doves were released to the sky -- a familiar symbol of peace and hope. But not all of the doves could fly. Some were crippled and remained on the ground, unable to fly. These doves were also symbolic of the Festival. Although the thousands of young people gathered from around the world were as impressive as soaring doves, the conflicts and challenges which were unavoidably confronted within the Festival were as sobering as a dove struggling to fly.

I attended the Festival as a representative of the LWF (along with Julius Filo, CSSR, Muna Issa, Jordan, and Udo Hahn, FRG), The following are reflections on my experiences. I participated in discussions such as peace & disarmament, women's rights, and South Africa, held in Thematic Centers, the focal point of the program in Moscow. Other major aspects of the program included national and regional clubs, which included many evening cultural programs; and various music and sports events. Because the program was so broad, each participant experienced it in a slightly different way.

In the streets of Moscow: Loan Löfgren and Muna Issa

The world problems discussed in the Thematic Centers were familiar and much of what was said could not be denied, for example the threat of nuclear war or oppression in the Third World. Although such discussions could have easily become one-sided, on several occasions representatives from non-aligned countries brought different viewpoints into the discussions.

To a great extent, I found the goals discussed -- peace, justice -- consistent with my values as a Christian, although one could assume that many or most of the participants in the discussions were atheist. Both the understanding of common goals and attempts to create plurality in the discussions were encouraging.

There were, however, two major things lacking in the discussions: self-criticism and practical ideas for working together. It was, unfortunately, very tempting for speakers to point to problems outside his-her own country, instead of sharing about the challenges within. Thus many opportunities to share information and experiences from home situations were foregone. Practical means toward peace and justice were often neglected as well. This was especially evident in a discussion titled "Atheists and Believers: Cooperation for Peace". The familiar areas where Christians and Atheists can agree and work together were explored, while the practical obstacles to cooperation, due to conflicting worldviews, were neglected.

As Christians we were not exempt from these conference problems and should ask ourselves if we are self-critical enough and if we find rhetoric too

tempting, at the cost of urgently needed praxis.

The peace discussion among Atheists and Christians occurred on a special day for the Christian organizations represented at the Festival. A morning session was devoted to "Dialog with Religious Students" and an afternoon session to the peace discussion, within the framework of the Thematic Centers. In the morning session, representatives of the various youth and student organizations related to various churches, and ecumenical bodies, and Christian students who attended as part of a national delegation gave various presentations. The latter was an encouraging sign of Christian participation scattered throughout the delegations. The focus of the discussion became the problems and possibilities for a Christian living within a socialist or communist system. A range of comments bloomed from the frank discussion -- from the question "What has communism ever done for Christianity?" to the testimony of a Cuban Christian about the role of her church in working with the government to build the society. A third perspective also came inbetween: the church living in a house it has not built, but which it rents. The lively discussion was a highlight for many of us Christians at the Festival.

In the peace discussion in the afternoon, one aspect of the thorny problems in cooperation among Christians and Atheists was explored: Christian participation in the government. Because of the atheistic basis of Communist party membership, Christians in socialist/communist countries are by definition excluded from leading roles within the country, but are in many cases playing a role through other parties or organizations. This also has implications for the peace work, and how far Christians and Communists can actually work together. Another broad area which was briefly touched upon was the unique position of the church concerning peace and the positions Christians may take as decisions of conscience which may conflict with the government's policies concerning peace.

In addition to these aspects of the program, there were special meetings arranged for us as Christian representatives with Christians from the Orthodox and Baptist Churches. The Orthodox visits were extensive and included a visit to a monastery in Moscow under rebuilding (and which the state recently returned to the church in commemoration of the Jubilee in 1988) and visits to Zagorsc, outside of Moscow, the educational center for the Orthodox Church. We also met with a Baptist congregation in Moscow for worship, along with a large group of American blacks, who brought their gospel music with them and sang as a choir. They sang for us as well as the pleasantly astonished Russian congregation, which had probably never before clapped their hands in church! The visits with churches during the Festival were so extensive, one could have almost attended only them as a parallel program to the Festival.

One of the questions I asked myself during the week in Moscow, was, "In which ways is this a festival?" The festival atmosphere was easily felt in the opening and closing ceremonies, the only occasions when all participants were gathered together. The African delegations brought a lot of color to the opening, as they processed-danced into the stadium. The Cuban club was renowned for its lively music and café atmosphere. The various Soviet Republics were also represented in song and dance at different points during the week. In this sense -- celebrating cultural diversity -- it was at times truly a festival. But the festival atmosphere and spontaneity were hindered by the sheer immensity of the program and of Moscow itself. Delegations stayed in large hotel complexes often located far away from each other, and the Thematic Centers were scattered across the city

as well. One place -- Red Square -- became the focus of spontaneous meetings and conversations. It was later in the week closed off, but many young people met in the street in front of the square anyway. Finally, the "youth-festival" atmosphere was oddly tempered by the presence of many not-so-young delegates. The number of gray heads stretched the imagination beyond any reasonable definition of "youth". In addition, the discussions (especially the presidiums) were almost always dominated by men.

The Festival was a valuable experience for me as a Christian in many respects. First, I learned a lot about dialog with atheists, which cannot be learned by attending only church conferences! Second, as a minority among the worldviews represented in Moscow, we tried as Christians to take a "quality not quantity" approach to the discussions. It was a healthy challenge to articulate our faith. Some have asked me if participation in Moscow amounts to indirect support of the Marxist-Leninist-atheist position. My answer is simply that the Festival exists or should exist for youth from all over the world, from various kinds of perspectives. Our perspective as Christians needs to be represented in such a setting, not only to learn from our atheist brothers and sisters about possibilities for cooperation, but to express our vision of the future, which is rooted in hope and based upon the coming of God's Kingdom.

The expression of that vision was not always easy or as impressive as soaring doves -- it was often as frustrating as a crippled attempt to fly. Perhaps the best description of our participation would be the "in the world, but not of it" calling. We came to Moscow "not of the world", from a nonrational "foolish" position of faith. But we were challenged to also live "in the world" and confront all the pains and misunderstandings and contradictions of the world and those who do not share our beliefs. This challenge provided a difficult but very fruitful experience.

Christian youth delegates in Moscow, invited by Metropolit Juvenalij and Archbishop Platon from the Russian Orthodox Church

Huge event - great opportunity to witness by Julius Filo

On the way to the Moscow festival I had several questions in my mind: 1) What does the practical result of the international preparation in which also Ecumenical youth counsils and other Christian youth organizations were involved look like? 2) How large is the Christian participation going to be? 3) How will we as Christian delegates be accepted?

1. Several international Christian youth organizations (e.g. EYCF, WSCF, CPC youth commission, YMCA) were directly or indirectly involved in the preparatory process. Besides, there were Christians present in many of the western national preparatory committees. In the discussions between EYCE, WSCF, CPC and YMCA there were several goals settled for the negotiations:

a) to ask for a center (other centers were: Peace & Disarmament, Student, Middle East, etc.) where the theme of the world youth and student festival could be discussed from the religious point of view. A religious center should be taken into the program of the festival,

b) to request a common place for worshipping together,

c) to ask for a room where the information about the Christian/religous events at the festival could be shared (e.g. via telephone),

d) to ask for the possibility to present publicly the organizations (in a panel presentation).

I noticed in Moscow that there might have been a possibility to present the above mentioned organizations although this was not prepared at the beginning (later we saw that not all of us were really interested). Because of lack of cooperation we didn't use the possibility of sharing a room that was finally offered to us; the ecumencial worship group didn't function, since there was an ecumenical worship prepared by the churches in Moscow; there was no special religious center after all in the festival, but there were several Christian/religous-related items, items where we as Christians had to say our witness, in the agenda of several other centers.

I found the following discussions most interesting:

a) Military service and alternatives in the peace work in Center Nr. 1 (Disarmament Center). Many representatives of the Christian peace movement were speaking in favour of the civil service as one of the human rights in all societies. On the other hand, representatives of the socialist countries were speaking about patriotic duty to defend ones native country.

b) Rights of the Palestinian people (Center Nr. 2 - Solidarity). It was interesting and sad to follow the difficulties of the dialogue between Arab and Jewish young people. Several Christians (FRG, Sweden) were trying to offer compromise solutions, which was mostly appreciated by the Jewish delegates.

c) On August 1 there were two activities dedicated to the Christian participants:

In the morning at the Student Center there was a meeting with the believing students. Organization of this meeting was offered to the WSCF by the preparatory committee. On behalf of the LWF, Joan Löfgren spoke about the youth work of the LWF and especially about the Pre-Assembly Youth Gathering in Budapest. Later in a discussion about the religious freedom in socialist countries, I was speaking about the task, possibilities and understanding of the work of the churches in showing the real situation and possibilities of evangelization and other duties of the church in my country. I also mentioned PAYG and participation of our Slovak youth in this gathering. PAYG was mentioned once more by an American delegate, and we had the feeling that in spite of the fact that we were only 4 (WSCF had 12, EYCE 15...) our presence there was at least as evident as theirs.

The second activity dedicated to Christian-related issues was in the afternoon at Center Nr. 1: Believers and atheists working for peace. I was asked by the organizers (EYCE) to prepare an introduction to the discussion. I was speaking about more trust and acceptance of the motivation to work for peace on both sides and about the specific contribution of Christians towards this cooperation in asking for reconciliation regardless of who is guilty, trust in spite of many bad experiences, love to those who seem to be our enemy. There were so many people present in the hall that there were not enough places for everybody. These discussions on August 1 were in general regarded as the most lively ones at the festival.

2. It was a great surprise for me to see how many Christians were present at the festival. We could meet separately in special meetings organized by the Russian Orthodox Church. We were offered many possibilities to get to know the culture, country and life of the churches in the USSR. The Russian Orthodox Church also offered a two days visitation program to Sagorsk as well as other meetings in Moscow. We met with the Baptist parish in Moscow who gave us an impression of very deep faith. I was also present at a meeting with members of the Supreme Sovjet of the USSR which gave us the possibility to hear about the aims of the economic and social life in the USSR and to raise some questions. We were 150-200 out of the 20.000 participants at the festival who took part in this meeting. In the discussion there were also some Christian delegates asking questions, e.g. about the cooperation between believers and non-believers in the USSR, about youth exchange programs, etc. Myra Blyth (GB), chairperson of the EYCE, was speaking on behalf of the five international Christian organizations present.

   How can only several hundred Christians out of 20.000 participants contribute in a meaningful way? It was a second surprise for me when I experienced how often the Christians at the festival expressed their understanding of the topics? It was surely not by chance that the representatives of the presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR in the above mentioned meeting addressed us as Christians several times although out of the 150-200 present perhaps only 10 were Christians. The active participation of the young Christians at the festival gave an impression of equal partnership in the discussions, especially in the thematic work of the festival. In sports and cultural meetings, going on parallel to the thematic work, the impression might have been another one.

3. It was stressed many times how grateful we were for the warm acceptance in Moscow. We (the LWF delegation consisting of 4 persons and th

Catholic Berlin Conference consisting of 2 persons) received two guides (and two Volga-cars) who were willing to solve all our problems and wishes. Sometimes we were surprising them by changing our minds in the planning of our program. The whole of Moscow gave priority to the participants of the festival in the museums and everywhere and we felt accepted in the same way or probably, as representatives of the international delegation, even more than other guests.

4. After this exciting week we came together for a small evaluation. The participation of the Christian youth was a surprise for all of us, in number and intensity. It was a good decision for the LWF and other Christian churches and youth organizations to send their representatives to Moscow. In this world community of younger and older youth, we could bring our Christian witness about our priorities and attitudes towards the solution of the problems of this world. May the voice of the festival for peace and justice bring its fruit for the population of the earth.

****

KONFERENZ MIT LEISER STIMME

Veranstaltung des Oekumenischen Jugendrates in Finnland von Sabine Rüdiger-Hahn

Tampere - "Partizipation, Entwicklung, Frieden", die Themen des Internationalen Jahres der Jugend, prägten auch die IV, Europäische Oekumenische Jugendkonferenz des Oekumenischen Jugendrates in Europa (EYCE), die vor kurzem in Tampere/Finnland stattfand. Mehr als 220 Tielnehmer aus 20 europäischen Ländern, aus Asien, Afrika, Nordamerika, Lateinamerika, der Karibik, dem Nahen Osten und aus dem Pazifik nahmen daran teil, ebenso Vertreter des Oekumenischen Rates der Kirchen, der Konferenz Europäischer Kirchen, der Weltgemeinschaft Orthodoxen Kirchen (syndesmos), der Christlichen Friedenskonferenz und des Weltbundes der Demokratischen Jugend, jedoch unverständlicherweise niemand vom Lutherischen Weltbund.

Nach mehr als zwei Jahren Vorbereitung trafen sich die Teilnehmer, um unter dem Motto "Jung sein in der alten Welt" in fünf Arbeitsgruppen die Themen Partizipation, Solidarität, Frieden und Gerechtigkeit, Schöpfung und ökologische Verantwortung sowie christliches Zeugnis in der Welt zu diskutieren und Glaubenserfahrungen auszutauschen. Darüberhinaus stand der Begegnung zwischen jungen Christen aus Ost- und dem übrigen Europa im Vordergrund.

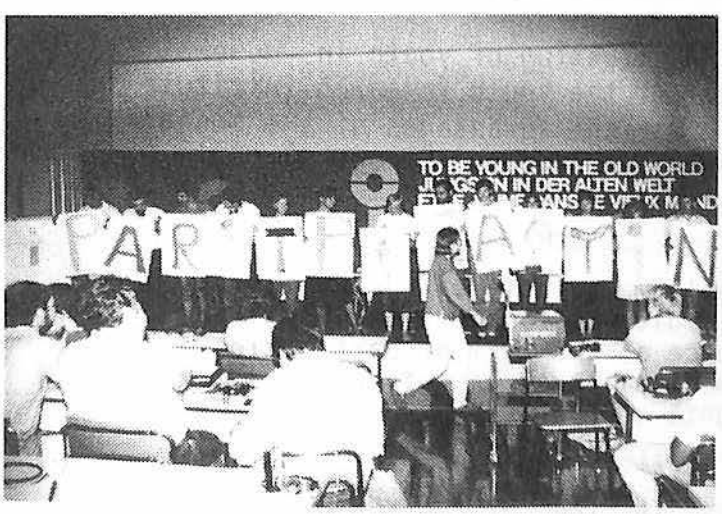
Fragt man nach den Ergebnissen dieser Konferenz, so sind diese schnell zusammengestellt. Ueber das Sich - Begegnen hinaus, stellte man eine gemeinsame Betroffenheit durch die die Welt bedrängenden Probleme fest. Als ersten Schritt zu möglichen Lösungen notierten die Jugendlichen in einem Abschlusskommuniqué, dass es notwendig sei "sich zu informieren, um handeln zu können, denn Ignoranz ist Sünde". Weiter ausgeführt wurden die in dem Dokument unter dem Abschnitt "Wir werden in Frieden leben", der im wesentlichen aus Formulierungen eines Dokumentes der Jugendkonferenz des Lutherischen Weltbundes in Budapest aus dem vergangenen Jahr besteht. Dabei werden die Kirchen aufgefordert, "die lauten und leisen Hilferufe der Jugendlichen ebenso zu hören, wie die Sorgen um die eigene Existenz". Weiter sollen sich die Kirchen für "ungehinderte Begegnungs- und Informations-

möglichkeiten einsetzen, um gegenseitiges Misstrauen und Vorurteile abbauen zu helfen" sowie dazu beitragen, dem Missbrauch von Macht durch ungerechte Strukturen zu widerstehen, "Sich für einen verantwortlichen Umgang mit Macht einzusetzen und geistliche Kriterien hierfür zu erarbeiten". Am Rande sei vermerkt, dass die Teilnehmer zwar den referierten Voten eines Allan Boesak oder Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker grosse Aufmerksamkeit zollten, jedoch eines der Hauptreferate der Jugendkonferenz des Lutherischen Weltbundes zum Thema "Frieden und Gerechtigkeit" des sächsischen Landesjugendpfarrers, Harald Bretschneider, praktisch nicht diskutiert wurde.

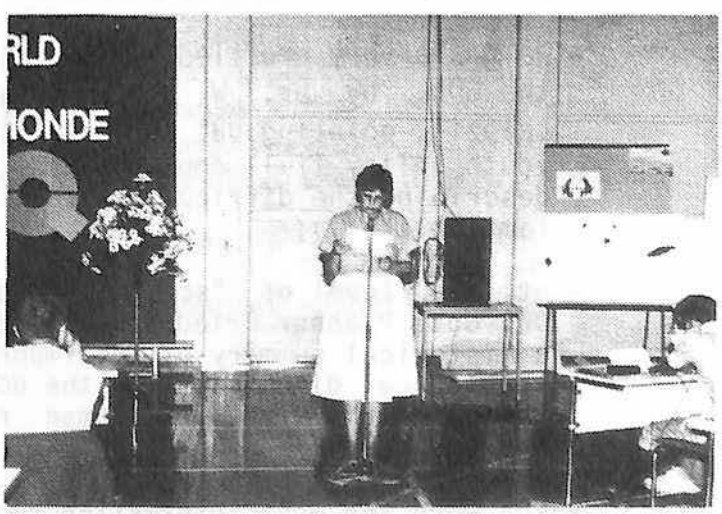
Dass die Konferenz des Oekumenischen Jugendrates in Europa nur "mit leiser Stimme" sprach, hängt sicher auch damit zusammen, dass das Abschlusskommuniqué von den jeweiligen Mitgliedsorganisationen des EYCE lediglich "zur Kenntnis" genommen wurde. Die Teilnehmer wurden gebeten, die Probleme der Welt und des Christentums von der Gemeinde bis hin zu weltweiten ökumenischen Ebene in ihrem jeweiligen eigenen Kontext weiterzuverfolgen.

Wer sich Impulse auf das ökumenische Miteinander erhoffte, wird eine unterschiedliche Bewertung treffen müssen: "Praktische Oekumene" ist dort leicht möglich, wo es um den Kampf gegen gemeinsame Probleme geht, die Menschen weltweit gleichermassen betreffen. Sie ist aber umso schwerer, wo theologische brisante und inhaltlich relevante Fragen zur Sprache kommen. Die immer noch andauernde Trennung zwischen den Konfessionen wurde den Jugendlichen beim Abschlussgottesdienst zum ersten und einzigen Mal während der gesamten Veranstaltung deutlich. Mit den Worten: "noch immer sind Teller und Kelch leer, noch immer können wir nicht gemeinsam zum Tisch des Herren gehen," kommentierte eine Schweizer Teilnehmerin treffend das Austeilen von Fruchtsamen statt der Feier des Abendmahls.

Ueber das Nachdenken über Lösungen bedrängender Probleme hinaus, täte es der ökumenischen Jugendarbeit in Europa sicher gut, sich auch einmal mit den untereinander trennenden theologischen Schranken auseinanderzusetzen. Dabei könnte gerade die Jugend einmal Mut zu verantworteten Grenzüberschreitungen zeigen.



Berich der Arbeitsgruppe I, Partizipation/Jugendarbeit in Europa



S. Rüdiger-Hahn verliest den Arbeitsgruppenbericht "Frieden und Gerechtigkeit" vor dem Plenum

MORE PARTICIPATION FOR THE YOUTH

A report from GDR by Julius Filo

A very attractive theme was chosen by the working group on Human rights in the Union of Evangelical Churches in the GDR for its Chorin II meeting on October 14-17, 1985. "Participation - Youth and Human Rights" sounds very interesting because of this particular International Youth Year and also because of the specific context of a socialist country. That is why I went to this meeting with many expectations and questions, which were in my mind.

First of all, I experienced a real Christian fellowship, which is probably only typical for a church which is surrounded by a society that does not fully identify its goals with the aims of the church. A closed community of brothers and sisters who try to learn from one another as much as possible about their life and work. A fellowship that was anxious to receive new inputs with newly opened perspectives. A community consisting of the permanent members of the working group on human rights, and participants from the youth work of the different evangelical Churches in the GDR, in order to have an authentic witness to the theme: young and old, pastors and lawyers, officials of the church and workers on the grass roots level, male and female, a community choosen after serious discussions.

I would like to mention several inputs prepared for the meeting because of their deep concern, and because of the fact that they reached all the necessary church levels:

- we had a convincing witness from a group of young people (17-20 years old) indicating their interest in the issues of the society (working on a small environment project) and active in the youth work of the church with a strong feeling that GDR is their home with many advantages on the social level and with a clear perception of the things they would like to see changed. In the same way, we heard several statements from the youth workers of the church, showing the open and hidden reserves in the participation of the youth in church and society;

- we got a very profiled lecture on the situation of youth in general in the GDR, by Dr. W. Brück, a member of the youth Research Institute in Leipzig, pointing out in a realistic way the advantages of the socialist youth policy (full employment of youth, no danger of drugs..) but also describing the difficulties that exist (emotional effects of a distrubed family life..);

- at the level of "scientific" theology we recieved a contribution from Dr. Götz Planner Friedrich on the theological aspects of participation; a historical summary of the importance of the term of partipation in the theological discussions on the ecumenical level was given by Dr. Krusche; the connection between human rights and participation was explored by Christa Lewek.

Which were the most interesting topics in the discussion? Choosing at least one interesting point out of the results of the four working groups:

It was felt that the parlamentarian-democratic structures in the church do not fully respond to the expectations, abilities and needs of the youth.

That is why more participatory regulations should be looked for, because the church is the place where real participatory democracy could ,indeed, exist.

The churches should support the "civil courage" of their youth in order to be faithful to the demand of the Bible to imitate Christ. As He went into the world we shall also try to understand the needs of the world and contribute to their solution.

It is very important to see the family as the place where the Christian vision of participation becomes truth. Traditional models do not always respond to this aim.

The way to increased participation on a global level is to look for as many possibilities for personal contacts between young members of the different churches as possible. The existing possible contacts should be explored more effectively (contacts to foreign students in the GDR, visitors to the churches of the GDR should spend more time in seeing youth groups and congregations, partnership between groups in the neighbouring socialist countries should be more developed).

Here are some very inspiring thoughts coming to all of us. Let's hope that a great deal of them will come true, not only in the GDR but also in all other churches.

****

A REMINDER

As we reported to you in our last Youth Newsletter we have a video film from the Youth Gathering in Budapest, entitled: "IN CHRIST - THE FUTURE IS NOW". The film is 32 minutes long and gives a very good introduction to the Youth Gathering and its main events as well as to the issues and problems dealt with during the Gathering. The film can serve as an exciting introduction in any youth group who wishes to deal with universal aspects of Christian faith, or questions of peace and justice, partnership or Christian witness in our time.

Copies of this film will be available in a limited number free of charge for distribution in regions where payment is impossible because of currency restrictions and other reasons. Otherwise, the price for a cassette is US$ 30. We hope that churches/youth organizations in Western Europe and North America will be interested and send us their orders.

The youth desk also has free copies of the following:

English copies left of the Pre-Assembly Youth Gathering report from Budapest.

Three brochures, entitled:

a) Exciting ideas for youth ministry
b) Youth group handbook
c) Helping youth grow in faith

Copies of the above mentioned mateiral can be ordered from the LWF Youth Desk, P.O. Box 66, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland.

W e h a v e r e a d ... f o u n d i n t e r e s t i n g ... a n d a r e n o w r e p o r t i n g t o y o u:

NEWS IN BRIEF - from the life of the youth in the world

United Nations Organization

According to information coming from the UN the world youth population in 1984 was estimated to 922 million. (For statistic purposes UN defines as youth persons between 15 and 24 years of age). At present approximately 187 million young people live in the more developed regions and 734 million in the less developed regions of the world. The youth component of the population of the less developed countries will be 84% of the total global youth population in the year 2000...

****

Argentina (Servicio de Informationes Religiosas VIII/72)

An outstanding article was published on July 15 in the daily newspaper "La Razon" reporting on a first national youth congress in Argentina in May 1985. In the time of the dictatorship youth were suspected and oppressed, now the time of renewal came - this was the main theme of the congress where 1300 young people, half of them from the 18 districts of the country and another half from the different youth organizations, universities and churches, were present. Participants were working in 20 commissions and dealt with the questions of the country and the Latin American continent.

****

Austria (edp A)

The first gathering of the full-time evangelical youth leaders was held in Weikersdorf b. Linz in October 25-28, 1985. 18 youth leaders from the Evangelical congregations, Evangelical youth associations and the so called free associations (like YMCA...), who spend more than half of their working hours with youth work, were present at this meeting. The first meeting was dedicated to the exchange of experiences and opinions about the different types of youth work in the Austrian Lutheran Church.

****

Berlin, German Democratic Republic (according to epd)

The traditional City-youth-gathering, to which all the youth congregations of the city are invited every second year, took place on Sunday, October 13 in the Sophy-Church and the main theme was "Joy of the play". Over one thousand young members of the Evangelical Church were attending this meeting where several contemporary problems of the youth work in the GDR were discussed.

****

Canada (LSMC News Release)

This August the Lutheran Student Movement in Canada met for their yearly conference in London, Ontario. The theme of the conference was "In God al-

ready one". It was a first joint national meeting of Lutherans with representatives of Catholic students in Canada. Besides business matters and a lot of pleasure in worshiping, playing together and many other items the meeting reaffirmed the solidarity with the people of Africa in their struggle against racism and apartheid and it voted to continue its exploration into poverty in Canada and how poverty affects various groups of people in Canada.

****

Ecuador

The government of the country has promised to support a project through which 2,5 million copies of the New Testament will be distributed. The purpose is that every pupil in the state school receives one copy free of charge. The New Testaments can be brought to the country without any custom fee by the "Worldwide Hausbibelunion" from the USA.

****

Federal Republic of Germany (epd)

The representative council of the Bavarian Lutheran Church's youth work has held its working meeting in Kastel Windsor (near Regensburg) on the draft of a document with the theme "Mass-unemployment" in October 1985. The opinion was voiced that as a result of the political measures against unemployment the rich become richer and the poor poorer. The meeting asked more Christian justice in the economy behaviour of the church, which also has its role to play in this field. The position paper should be finished by spring 1986.

****

Federal Republic of Germany (Süddeutsche Zeitung Nr. 234)

According to the last study made by Arthur Fisher, Werner Fuchs and Jürgen Zinnecker and financed by the German Shell Youth Organization - 5 volumes and over 2000 pages - the adults of today are more willing to learn from their children, but they are at the same time more helpless than their children. The parents in the fifties were a good example only for 16% of the young people (15-24 years of age), today only for 3% of them. The study gives four different comparisons: youth in 1984 and in the fifties; youth in 1984 and the adults of 1984; youth in the fifties and the adults of today (30 years ago they were young - how have their views changed?); finally the comparison to the last study of Shell from 1981.

****

France - Large protestant youth festival

The American revivalist Luis Palau was speaking in Paris at the largest protestant youth festival in France with more than 5000 participants. The chairperson of the festival, Claude Grandjean, was surprised at the large number of participants, since the Evangelical congregations are small in membership. To be able to go to Paris for the festival, Palau made a break in his Evangelization in Zürich, were he spent three weeks speaking to altogether 115.000 people.

****

German Democratic Republic (Saxonia Lutheran Church, Maik Förster, Youth Coworker of the church-district Kamenz)

Inspired by the VII Assembly of the LWF and by the theme of the International Youth Year "Participation - Development - Peace" the committee of voluntary youth workers of the church-district in Kamenz applied to the synod of the church-district for two places for youth representatives in the synod. The nomination committee accepted this proposal and offered one place for a youth representative with full rights in the district synod. The mentioned youth workers committee delegated a 19 years old female worker. The hope was strengthened, that this good example will be followed by others.

****

German Democratic Republic

The peace decade 1985 will beheld November 10-20 in the Union of the Evangelical Churches in the GDR under the theme: "Peace is growing from Justice", assuming the 2% appeal that was accepted already in the assembly of churches in Uppsala and renewed in Vancouver. Everybody who would be willing to join this appeal can also decide in what way his/her contribution can be used - for aid projects or for awareness building measures in the own country.

****

Hong Kong - "Youth to Youth" (Asia Lutheran News 5/85)

HONG KONG --Two hundred and fifty young people in Hong Kong have been visiting villages in the remoter parts of the colony distributing Bible Society Scriptures. The young volunteers, from some 80 schools and churches in Hong Kong, are part of a campaign called 'Share God's World - Youth to Youth.'

The Bible Society has initiated a series of 'Scripture walks' to help carry out this program in the northern New Territories (near the border with the People's Republic of China) and on the offshore islands. Thus, during a five-day hike in July, volunteers were able to visit about 10,000 rural households.

****

India

A worldwide youth meeting is organized by the Taizé community and local organizers for Madras, India for the time December 27, 1985 - January 1, 1986 for young people from all over the world regardless of their confession. It should be a good possibility, for those who wish, to spend five days in meditation and prayer in a silent place, to participate in the life of the neighborhood and local church communities of Madras and to share one's views in an ecumenical fellowship. One theological student from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia and Singapore will attend this meeting with the assistance of the LWF/youth desk. So we will hear more about this meeting, which is supposed to be a huge one, later.

****

New Zealand - Lutheran Synod Emphasises Youth Ministry

Marton, New Zealand, April 30 -- Ministry to youth, and objectives through to the year 2000, were the two main issues to come before the recently concluded Synod of the Lutheran Church of New Zealand (LCNZ). The Synod, held in the St. Martin's Church in Marton, drew delegates and visitors from every Lutheran congregation in the country. The emphasis on youth ministry came out in several ways. The theme of the Synod -- **In Christ the Future is Now** -- was taken over from a world assembly of Lutheran youth in Budapest last July. It was expanded in a variety of services that all highlighted the role of youth in the church.

****

South Africa hangs black poet despite international pleas

Geneva, Oct. 24 (lwi) - Despite please for clemency from around the world, South Africa hung black poet Benjamin Moloise last week (Oct. 18). The execution set off widespread unrest. Moloise had been charged with killing a police officer, though the African National Congress had claimed responsibility for the killing. South Africa ignored please for clemency and executed him on the basis of an alleged confession. But Moloise said the confession had been extracted under torture.

A number of groups around the world protested the execution. Lutheran World Federation General Secretary Gunnar Staalsett cabled South African President Botha the day before the execution: "We plead with you for the life of Benjamin Moloise. On behalf of Lutheran churches around the world, we urgently call upon you not to carry out the death sentence." The World Council of Churches also made a plea that the sentence be commuted. Nobel peace laureate Bishop Desmond Tutu appealed for clemency at a rally in Cape Town the night before the execution. Leaders from many countries and a UN resolution also asked that the execution be stopped.

****

South Africa

As a letter sent to the LWF on September 11, 1985 from the South African Council of Churches says, COSAS, the largest student organization of South Africa was banned under South African law in terms of section 4 (1) of the International security act of 1982. COSAS was formed in 1979, after the banning of its predecessor and grew into the largest student organization in South Africa. The above mentioned letter ends with the words: "Please keep us in your thoughts and prayers. Any sign of solidarity will be welcomed by the South African Youth."

****

South Africa - A struggle for a just education for all students and pupils is going on (Die Stiebeuel 3/85)

A POEM ON EDUCATION

"We don't need no education"
goes the line of a song.
But the songwriter I'm sure,
is definitely wrong.
We need it like we do fresh air,
Although sometimes it leaves
us with our hands in our hair.

Without education we would be lost,
Imagine at what great cost.
Study, is it really something
that we must do?
Yes, in the end it could only
be beneficial to you!

If you think you can go without
it you're mad!

In today's cruel world you won't be
able to forever depend on Dad.
But equal rights is all we ask.
I can guarantee you studying
will then be a much more pleasant task.

Our Education System is so rotten
Our plea for change totally forgotten.
So all we as christian Youth can do
is pray.
And hope for better education that
will be here to stay.

HEATHER DRAAI

****

Sweden - New paper started by the Church of Sweden Youth Organization

The Church of Sweden Youth Organization have launched a new magazine under the name "OchSaVidare". The magazine is launched to give added strength to the Youth Year. It will be a forum for debate, new ideas and new plans for youth work. Editor of the new magazine is Mr. Lars Netterfors who says "that it is important that we, the young people in the church and in the society help to find new ways for the future. Our magazine is one such attempt."

****

Sweden - Church of Sweden tries new ways to work in schools

For many years it was normal that each morning every class in the Swedish school system should start with a morning prayer. That system ended some years ago and was replaced with an instruction to the teachers to start each day with an "inspirational" period of a few minutes. About the same time the subject "christian education" was removed from the timetable in the schools. Christian instruction became one of many parts of instruction in the major world religions.

The Church of Sweden has now published a little booklet in which it outlines new and constructive ways of presenting Christian thoughts to the pupils. The new booklet describes ways and means whereby pupils and teachers can come into contact with the church and its teachings.

****

UBS Focuses on Youth, 1985-86 (Asia Lutheran News 5/85)

HONG KONG, Aug. 29 -- A phone call from the Rev. Jin Li Tsai, the general Secretary of the Taiwan Bible Society, confirmed the news that the youth Rally planned in connection with the International Year of the Youth had been held. The results of cooperation with many youth organizations and churches saw 20,000 specially prepared Youth New Testaments distributed, a further 20,000 immediately ordered requiring the ordering of 40,000 more.

This event is not an isolated one. Throughout the Asia Pacific Region of the United Bible Societies (UBS) stretching from Iran in the West to Japan in the North and New Zealand in the south similar events are being held to mark the International Year of the Youth. In New Zealand a special campaign to make God's Word available to school children was launched with the participation of the Prime Minister, Mr. Langley. Papua New guinea will see 50,000 special presentation New Testaments mailed out for distribution through youth officers in many parts of the country.

The youth emphasis begun in the International Year of the Youth will be continued throughout the period 1986-1988. Along with the governments of china, Singapore and India amongst others, the United Bible societies are convinced and committed to involving youth in a more in-depth way in all their programs. With 50 percent of Asia's population under the age of 30 it is important that youth be given not mere tokenism but find a way to be actively involved at all levels of the ministry of the B.S. In January and February 1986 two major planning seminars will be held in the Philippines and Sri Lanka respectively to outline this program proposal and develop concrete ways by which it can be implemented. This will then be followed in September 1986 with a further training seminar to ensure that the ability to carry out the proposals are taught.

In these ways the United Bible Societies are consciously planning to pass on the vision as exhorted by the Apostle Paul in II Timothy 2:2

> Take the teachings that you heard me proclaim
> in the presence of many witnesses, and entrust
> them to reliable people, who will be able to
> teach others also.

****

USA (Lutheran Standard, Sept. 6, 1985)

Fifteen thousand young Lutherans, youth leaders, and adult counselors went to the mountain, August 7-11, to "Proclaim him Lord of all," and the mile-high city of Denver, Colorado, heard their proclamation. The American Lutheran Church's (ALC) Youth Gathering was the culmination of three years of fund-raising activities sponsored by the youth to defray the cost of air fare or chartered buses, hotel rooms, registration fees, and food.

It was the largest convention of the year in Denver, which is hosting more than 800 conventions in 1985. McNichols Arena in Denver rang with music and applause as almost 17,000 participants in the Youth Gathering "proclaimed him Lord of all." Former President Jimmy Carter received standing ovations as he urged the young Lutherans to work for human rights and world peace. They greeted Howard Hanger and the Jazz Fantasy with unrehearsed "waves" of enthusiasm that encircled the arena throughout the five-day event. Following the Friday night presentation, the crowd filled the arena parking lot for a Jubilee picnic under the stars.

****

Yugoslavia - (FRG, Die Welt Nr. 234)

An opinion poll carried out by the official youth organization in Croatia in Adria-City Split with about 100.000 inhabitants asked the question, how free is the youth in the choice of their examples? The question: with what personalities could you identify yourself, was answered by the teen-agers in the following way: the most popular was Mother Theresa with 9,6%, the second was the Yugoslavian popstar Rade Serbedzi with 9,1% and on the third place the Pope John Paul II with 6,6%...

****

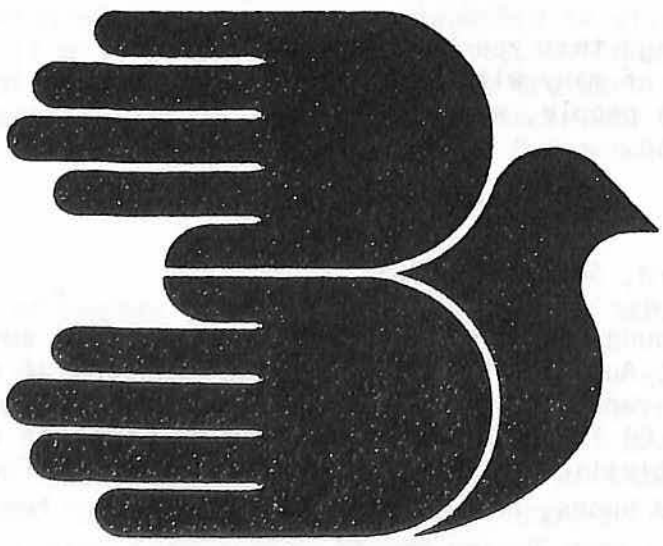
Request for a Pen Friend:

Mr. Joseph A.M. Meshack (18), Tanzanian secondary boy, would like to have pen pals from Switzerland, UK, Sweden, Denmark, Norway and everywhere!
Hobbies: visiting, exchange of ideas, traveling, Bible knowledge,
Address: Ilborn Secondary School, P.O. Box 3014, Arusha, Tanzania.

****

If you did not see a report about your youth activity in this issue, please send it to the LWF Youth Desk in Geneva and we will print it in a future issue.

****



CONTENTS:
==========

Page	2	EDITORIAL - "Power in Love"
"	3	A NOTE
"	4	A PERSONAL LETTER FROM THE EDITOR
		ANOTHER NOTE
"	5	YOUTH AND MISSION
"	6	by Julius Paul
"	8	by Joan Löfgren
"	11	by Tamas Fabiny
"	14	by Udo Hahn
"	17	LETTER OF EVALUATION OF PAYG FROM FRG DELEGATES
"	20	3rd ALL AFRICA YOUTH AND STUDENT ASSEMBLY, YAOUNDE, CAMEROON
"	22	THE YAOUNDE COVENANT
"	26	REPORT ON INTERNSHIP
"	27	USSR VISITATION
"	30	TRANSLATION - USSR VISITATION
"	34	WOMEN'S CONFERENCE IN NAIROBI/KENYA
"	36	TRANSLATION - WOMEN'S CONFERENCE IN NAIROBI/KENYA
"	37	TEN SING MOVEMENT IN NORWAY
"	39	3 REFLECTIONS ON THE MOSCOW YOUTH FESTIVAL
		by Udo Hahn
"	41	by Joan Löfgren
"	44	by Julius Filo
"	46	KONFERENZ MIT LEISER STIMME - Report from Finland
"	48	MORE PARTICIPATION FOR THE YOUTH - Report from GDR
"	49	A REMINDER
"	50	NEWS IN BRIEF

Dear Friend,

We from the LWF youth desk wish you a blessed Christmas and may Jesus Christ bring his peace and hope to your life in the new year!